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Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

BY

J. W. von Goethe

Translated by

Thomas Carlyle

In Two Volumes

Volume II.

Edited by Nathan Haskell Dole

Boston Francis A. Niccolls & Company *Publishers*

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Book V.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

CHAPTER I.

THUS Wilhelm, to his pair of former wounds, which were yet scarcely healed, had now got the accession of a third, which was fresh and not a little disagreeable. Aurelia would not suffer him to call a surgeon: she dressed the hand with all manner of strange speeches, saws, and ceremonies, and so placed him in a very painful situation. Yet not he alone, but all persons who came near her, suffered by her restlessness and singularity, and no one more than little Felix. This stirring child was exceedingly impatient under such oppression, and showed himself still naughtier the more she censured and instructed him.

He delighted in some practices which commonly are thought bad habits, and in which she would not by any means indulge him. He would drink, for example, rather from the bottle than the glass; and his food seemed visibly to have a better relish when eaten from the bowl than from the plate. Such ill-breeding was not overlooked: if he left the door standing open, or slammed it to; if, when bid do anything, he stood stock-still, or ran off violently, — he was sure to have a long lecture inflicted on him for the fault. Yet he showed no symptoms of improvement from this training: on the other hand, his affection for Aurelia seemed daily to diminish; there was nothing tender in his tone

when he called her mother; whereas he passionately clung to the old nurse, who let him have his will in everything.

But she likewise had of late become so sick, that they had at last been obliged to take her from the house into a quiet lodging; and Felix would have been entirely alone if Mignon had not, like a kindly guardian spirit, come to help him. The two children talked together, and amused each other in the prettiest style. She taught him little songs; and he, having an excellent memory, frequently recited them, to the surprise of those about him. She attempted also to explain her maps to him. With these she was still very busy, though she did not seem to take the fittest method. For, in studying countries, she appeared to care little about any other point than whether they were cold or warm. Of the north and south poles, of the horrid ice which reigns there, and of the increasing heat the farther one retires from them, she could give a very clear account. When any one was travelling, she merely asked whether he was going northward or southward, and strove to find his route in her little charts. Especially when Wilhelm spoke of travelling, she was all attention, and seemed vexed when anything occurred to change the subject. Though she could not be prevailed upon to undertake a part, or even to enter the theatre when any play was acting, yet she willingly and zealously committed many odes and songs to memory; and by unexpectedly, and, as it were, on the spur of the moment, reciting some such poem, generally of the earnest and solemn kind, she would often cause astonishment in every one.

Serlo, accustomed to regard with favour every trace of opening talent, encouraged her in such performances; but what pleased him most in Mignon was her sprightly, various, and often even mirthful, singing. By means of a similar gift, the harper likewise had acquired his

favour. Without himself possessing any genius for music, or playing on any instrument, Serlo could rightly prize the value of the art: he failed not, as often as he could, to enjoy this pleasure, which cannot be compared with any other. He held a concert once a week; and now, with Mignon, the harper, and Laertes, who was not unskilful on the violin, he had formed a very curious domestic band.

He was wont to say, "Men are so inclined to content themselves with what is commonest; the spirit and the senses so easily grow dead to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect, — that every one should study, by all methods, to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling these things. For no man can bear to be entirely deprived of such enjoyments: it is only because they are not used to taste of what is excellent that the generality of people take delight in silly and insipid things, provided they be new. For this reason," he would add, "one ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words." With such a turn of thought in Serlo, which in some degree was natural to him, the persons who frequented his society could scarcely be in want of pleasant conversation.

It was in the midst of these instructive entertainments, that Wilhelm one day received a letter sealed in black. Werner's hand betokened mournful news; and our friend was not a little shocked when, opening the sheet, he found it to contain the tidings of his father's death, conveyed in a very few words. After a short and sudden illness, he had parted from the world, leaving his domestic affairs in the best possible order.

This unlooked-for intelligence struck Wilhelm to the heart. He deeply felt how careless and negligent we

often are of friends and relations while they inhabit with us this terrestrial sojourn; and how we first repent of our insensibility when the fair union, at least for this side of time, is finally cut asunder. His grief for the early death of this honest parent was mitigated only by the feeling that he had loved but little in the world, and the conviction that he had enjoyed but little.

Wilhelm's thoughts soon turned to his own predicament, and he felt himself extremely discomposed. A person can scarcely be put into a more dangerous position, than when external circumstances have produced some striking change in his condition, without his manner of feeling and of thinking having undergone any preparation for it. There is, then, an epoch without epoch; and the contradiction which arises is the greater the less the person feels that he is not trained for this new manner of existence.

Wilhelm saw himself in freedom, at a moment when he could not yet be at one with himself. His thoughts were noble, his motives pure, his purposes were not to be despised. All this he could, with some degree of confidence, acknowledge to himself: but he had of late been frequently enough compelled to notice, that experience was sadly wanting to him; and hence, on the experience of others, and on the results which they deduced from it, he put a value far beyond its real one, and thus led himself still deeper into error. What he wanted, he conceived he might most readily acquire if he undertook to collect and retain whatever memorable thought he should meet with in reading or in conversation. He accordingly recorded his own or other men's opinions, nay, wrote whole dialogues, when they chanced to interest him. But unhappily by this means he held fast the false no less firmly than the true; he dwelt far too long on one idea, particularly when it was of an aphoristic shape; and thus he left his natural mode of thought and action, and frequently

took foreign lights for his lodestars. Aurelia's bitterness, and Laertes's cold contempt for men, warped his judgment oftener than they should have done: but no one, in his present case, would have been so dangerous as Jarno, a man whose clear intellect could form a just and rigorous decision about present things, but who erred, withal, in enunciating these particular decisions with a kind of universal application; whereas, in truth, the judgments of the understanding are properly of force but once, and that in the strictest cases, and become inaccurate in some degree when applied to any other.

Thus Wilhelm, striving to become consistent with himself, was deviating farther and farther from wholesome consistency; and this confusion made it easier for his passions to employ their whole artillery against him, and thus still farther to perplex his views of duty.

Serlo did not fail to take advantage of the late tidings; and in truth he daily had more reason to be anxious about some fresh arrangement of his people. Either he must soon renew his old contracts, — a measure he was not specially fond of; for several of his actors, who reckoned themselves indispensable, were growing more and more arrogant, — or else he must entirely new-model and re-form his company; which plan he looked upon as preferable.

Though he did not personally importune our friend, he set Aurelia and Philina on him; and the other wanderers, longing for some kind of settlement, on their side, gave Wilhelm not a moment's rest; so that he stood hesitating in his choice, in no slight embarrassment till he should decide. Who would have thought that a letter of Werner's, written with quite different views, should have forced him on resolving? We shall omit the introduction, and give the rest of it with little alteration.

CHAPTER II.

"It was, therefore, and it always must be, right for every one, on any opportunity, to follow his vocation and exhibit his activity. Scarcely had the good old man been gone a quarter of an hour, when everything in the house began moving by a different plan than his. Friends, acquaintances, relations, crowded forward, especially all sorts of people who on such occasions use to gain anything. They fetched and carried, they counted, wrote, and reckoned; some brought wine and meat, others ate and drank; and none seemed busier than the women getting out the mournings.

"Such being the case, thou wilt not blame me, that, in this emergency, I likewise thought of *my* advantage. I made myself as active, and as helpful to thy sister, as I could, and, so soon as it was any way decorous, signified to her that it had now become our business to accelerate a union which our parents, in their too great circumspection, had hitherto postponed.

"Do not suppose, however, that it came into our heads to take possession of that monstrous empty house. We are more modest and more rational. Thou shalt hear our plan: thy sister, so soon as we are married, comes to our house; and thy mother comes along with her. 'How can that be?' thou wilt say: 'you have scarcely room for yourselves in that hampered nest.' There lies the art of it, my friend. Good packing renders all things possible: thou wouldst not believe what space one finds when one desires to occupy but little. The large house we shall sell, — an oppor-

tunity occurs for this; and the money we shall draw for it will produce a hundredfold.

"I hope this meets thy views: I hope also thou hast not inherited the smallest particle of those unprofitable tastes for which thy father and thy grandfather were noted. The latter placed his greatest happiness in having about him a multitude of dull-looking works of art, which no one, I may well say no one, could enjoy with him: the former lived in a stately pomp, which he suffered no one to enjoy with him. We mean to manage otherwise, and we expect thy approbation.

"It is true, I myself in all the house have no place whatever but the stool before my writing-desk; and I see not clearly where they will be able to put a cradle down: but, in return, the room we shall have out-of-doors will be the more abundant. Coffee-houses and clubs for the husband, walks and drives for the wife, and pleasant country jaunts for both. But the chief advantage in our plan is, that, the round table being now completely filled, our father cannot ask his friends to dinner, who, the more he strove to entertain them, used to laugh at him the more.

"Now no superfluity for us! Not too much furniture and apparatus; no coach, no horses! Nothing but money, and the liberty, day after day, to do what you like in reason. No wardrobe; still the best and newest on your back: the man may wear his coat till it is done; the wife may truck her gown, the moment it is going out of fashion. There is nothing so unsufferable to me as an old huckster's shop of property. If you would offer me a jewel, on condition of my wearing it daily on my finger, I would not accept it; for how can one conceive any pleasure in a dead capital? This, then, is my confession of faith: To transact your business, to make money, to be merry with your household; and about the rest of the earth

to trouble yourself no further than where you can be of service to it.

"But ere now thou art saying, 'And, pray, what is to be done with me in this sage plan of yours? Where shall I find shelter when you have sold my own house, and not the smallest room remains in yours?'

"This is, in truth, the main point, brother; and in this, too, I shall have it in my power to serve thee. But first I must present the just tribute of my praise for time so spent as thine has been.

"Tell me, how hast thou within a few weeks become so skilled in every useful, interesting object? Highly as I thought of thy powers, I did not reckon such attention and such diligence among the number. Thy journal shows us with what profit thou art travelling. The description of the iron and the copper forges is exquisite: it evinces a complete knowledge of the subject. I myself was once there; but my relation, compared with this, has but a very bungled look. The whole letter on the linen-trade is full of information: the remarks on commercial competition are at once just and striking. In one or two places, there are errors in addition, which indeed are very pardonable.

"But what most delights my father and myself, is thy thorough knowledge of husbandry, and the improvement of landed property. We have thoughts of purchasing a large estate, at present under sequestration, in a very fruitful district. For paying it, we mean to use the money realised by the sale of the house; another portion we shall borrow; a portion may remain unpaid. And we count on thee for going thither, and superintending the improvement of it; by which means, before many years are passed, the land, to speak in moderation, will have risen above a third in value. We shall then bring it to the market again, seek out a larger piece, improve and trade as formerly.

For all this thou art the man. Our pens, meanwhile, will not lie idle here; and so by and by we shall rise to be enviable people.

"For the present, fare thee well! Enjoy life on thy journey, and turn thy face wherever thou canst find contentment and advantage. For the next half year we shall not need thee; thou canst look about thee in the world as thou pleasest: a judicious person finds his best instruction in his travels. Farewell! I rejoice at being connected with thee so closely by relation, and now united with thee in the spirit of activity."

Well as this letter might be penned, and full of economical truths as it was, Wilhelm felt displeased with it for more than one reason. The praise bestowed on him for his pretended statistical, technological, and rural knowledge was a silent reprimand. The ideal of the happiness of civic life, which his worthy brother sketched, by no means charmed him: on the contrary, a secret spirit of contradiction dragged him forcibly the other way. He convinced himself, that, except on the stage, he could nowhere find that mental culture which he longed to give himself: he seemed to grow the more decided in his resolution, the more strongly Werner, without knowing it, opposed him. Thus assailed, he collected all his arguments together, and buttressed his opinions in his mind the more carefully, the more desirable he reckoned it to show them in a favourable light to Werner; and in this manner he produced an answer, which also we insert.

CHAPTER III.

"THY letter is so well written, and so prudently and wisely conceived, that no objection can be made to it. Only thou must pardon me, when I declare that one may think, maintain, and do directly the reverse, and yet be in the right as well as thou. Thy mode of being and imagining appears to turn on boundless acquisition, and a light, mirthful manner of enjoyment: I need scarcely tell thee, that in all this I find little that can charm me.

"First, however, I am sorry to admit, that my journal is none of mine. Under the pressure of necessity, and to satisfy my father, it was patched together by a friend's help, out of many books: and though in words I know the objects it relates to, and more of the like sort, I by no means understand them, or can occupy myself about them. What good were it for me to manufacture perfect iron while my own breast is full of dross? What would it stead me to put properties of land in order, while I am at variance with myself?

"To speak it in a word, the cultivation of my individual self, here as I am, has from my youth upwards been constantly though dimly my wish and my purpose. The same intention I still cherish, but the means of realising it are now grown somewhat clearer. I have seen more of life than thou believest, and profited more by it also. Give some attention, then, to what I say, though it should not altogether tally with thy own opinions.

"Had I been a nobleman, our dispute would soon have been decided; but, being a simple burgher, I

must take a path of my own: and I fear it may be difficult to make thee understand me. I know not how it is in foreign countries, but in Germany, a universal, and, if I may say so, personal, cultivation is beyond the reach of any one except a nobleman. A burgher may acquire merit; by excessive efforts he may even educate his mind; but his personal qualities are lost, or worse than lost, let him struggle as he will. Since the nobleman, frequenting the society of the most polished, is compelled to give himself a polished manner; since this manner, neither door nor gate being shut against him, grows at last an unconstrained one; since, in court or camp, his figure, his person, are a part of his possessions, and, it may be, the most necessary part, — he has reason enough to put some value on them, and to show that he puts some. A certain stately grace in common things, a sort of gay elegance in earnest and important ones, becomes him well; for it shows him to be everywhere in equilibrium. He is a public person; and the more cultivated his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the more staid and measured his whole being is, the more perfect is he. If to high and low, to friends and relations, he continues still the same, then nothing can be said against him, none may wish him otherwise. His coldness must be reckoned clearness of head, his dissimulation prudence. If he can rule himself externally at every moment of his life, no man has aught more to demand of him; and, whatever else there may be in him or about him, capacities, talents, wealth, all seem gifts of supererogation.

"Now, imagine any burgher offering ever to pretend to these advantages, he will utterly fail, and the more completely, the greater inclination and the more endowments nature may have given him for that mode of being.

"Since, in common life, the nobleman is hampered

by no limits; since kings, or kinglike figures, do not differ from him, — he can everywhere advance with a silent consciousness, as if before his equals: everywhere he is entitled to press forward, whereas nothing more beseems the burgher than the quiet feeling of the limits that are drawn around him. The burgher may not ask himself, 'What art thou?' He can only ask, 'What hast thou? What discernment, knowledge, talent, wealth?' If the nobleman, merely by his personal carriage, offers all that can be asked of him, the burgher by his personal carriage offers nothing, and can offer nothing. The former has a right to *seem:* the latter is compelled to *be,* and what he aims at seeming becomes ludicrous and tasteless. The former does and makes, the latter but effects and procures; he must cultivate some single gifts in order to be useful; and it is beforehand settled, that, in his manner of existence, there is no harmony, and can be none, since he is bound to make himself of use in one department, and so has to relinquish all the others.

"Perhaps the reason of this difference is not the usurpation of the nobles, and the submission of the burghers, but the constitution of society itself. Whether it will ever alter, and how, is to me of small importance: my present business is to meet my own case, as matters actually stand; to consider by what means I may save myself, and reach the object which I cannot live in peace without.

"Now, this harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied me by birth, is exactly what I most long for. Since leaving thee, I have gained much by voluntary practice: I have laid aside much of my wonted embarrassment, and can bear myself in very tolerable style. My speech and voice I have likewise been attending to; and I may say, without much vanity, that in society I do not cause displeasure. But I will not conceal from thee, that

my inclination to become a public person, and to please and influence in a larger circle, is daily growing more insuperable. With this, there is combined my love for poetry and all that is related to it; and the necessity I feel to cultivate my mental faculties and tastes, that so, in this enjoyment henceforth indispensable, I may esteem as good the good alone, as beautiful the beautiful alone. Thou seest well, that for me all this is nowhere to be met with except upon the stage; that in this element alone can I effect and cultivate myself according to my wishes. On the boards a polished man appears in his splendour with personal accomplishments, just as he does so in the upper classes of society; body and spirit must advance with equal steps in all his studies; and there I shall have it in my power at once to be and seem as well as anywhere. If I further long for solid occupations, we have there mechanical vexations in abundance: I may give my patience daily exercise.

"Dispute not with me on this subject; for, ere thou writest, the step is taken. In compliance with the ruling prejudices, I will change my name; as, indeed, that of Meister, or Master, does not suit me. Farewell! Our fortune is in good hands: on that subject I shall not disturb myself. What I need I will, as occasion calls, require from thee: it will not be much, for I hope my art will be sufficient to maintain me."

Scarcely was the letter sent away, when our friend made good his words. To the great surprise of Serlo and the rest, he at once declared that he was ready to become an actor, and bind himself by a contract on reasonable terms. With regard to these they were soon agreed; for Serlo had before made offers, with which Wilhelm and his comrades had good reason to be satisfied. The whole of that unlucky company, wherewith we have had so long to occupy ourselves,

was now at once received; and, except perhaps Laertes, not a member of it showed the smallest thankfulness to Wilhelm. As they had entreated without confidence, so they accepted without gratitude. Most of them preferred ascribing their appointment to the influence of Philina, and directed their thanks to her. Meanwhile the contracts had been written out, and were now a-signing. At the moment when our friend was subscribing his assumed designation, by some inexplicable concatenation of ideas, there arose before his mind's eye the image of that green in the forest where he lay wounded in Philina's lap. The lovely Amazon came riding on her gray palfrey from the bushes of the wood: she approached him and dismounted. Her humane anxiety made her come and go: at length she stood before him. The white surtout fell down from her shoulders: her countenance, her form, began to glance in radiance; and she vanished from his sight. He wrote his name mechanically only, not knowing what he did, and felt not, till after he had signed, that Mignon was standing at his side, was holding by his arm, and had softly tried to stop him, and pull back his hand.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of the conditions under which our friend had gone upon the stage was not acceded to by Serlo without some limitations. Wilhelm had required that "Hamlet" should be played entire and unmutilated: the other had agreed to this strange stipulation, in so far as it was *possible*. On this point they had many a contest; for as to what was possible or not possible, and what parts of the piece could be omitted without mutilating it, the two were of very different opinions.

Wilhelm was still in that happy season when one cannot understand how, in the woman one loves, in the writer one honours, there should be anything defective. The feeling they excite in us is so entire, so accordant with itself, that we cannot help attributing the same perfect harmony to the objects themselves. Serlo again was willing to discriminate, perhaps too willing: his acute understanding could usually discern in any work of art nothing but a more or less *im*perfect whole. He thought, that as pieces usually stood, there was little reason to be chary about meddling with them; that of course Shakespeare, and particularly "Hamlet," would need to suffer much curtailment.

But, when Serlo talked of separating the wheat from the chaff, Wilhelm would not hear of it. "It is not chaff and wheat together," said he: "it is a trunk with boughs, twigs, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Is not the one there with the others, and by means of them?" To which Serlo would reply that people did not bring a whole tree upon the table; that the artist was required to present his guests with silver apples in

platters of silver. They exhausted their invention in similitudes, and their opinions seemed still further to diverge.

Our friend was on the borders of despair, when on one occasion, after much debating, Serlo counselled him to take the simple plan, — to make a brief resolution, to grasp his pen, to peruse the tragedy; dashing out whatever would not answer, compressing several personages into one: and if he was not skilled in such proceedings, or had not heart enough for going through with them, he might leave the task to him, the manager, who would engage to make short work with it.

"That is not our bargain," answered Wilhelm. "How can you, with all your taste, show so much levity?"

"My friend," cried Serlo, "you yourself will erelong feel it and show it. I know too well how shocking such a mode of treating works is: perhaps it never was allowed on any theatre till now. But where, indeed, was ever one so slighted as ours? Authors force us on this wretched clipping system, and the public tolerates it. How many pieces have we, pray, which do not overstep the measure of our numbers, of our decorations and theatrical machinery, of the proper time, of the fit alternation of dialogue, and the physical strength of the actor? And yet we are to play, and play, and constantly give novelties. Ought we not to profit by our privilege, then, since we accomplish just as much by mutilated works as by entire ones? It is the public itself that grants the privilege. Few Germans, perhaps few men of any modern nation, have a proper sense of an æsthetic whole, — they praise and blame by passages; they are charmed by passages; and who has greater reason to rejoice at this than actors, since the stage is ever but a patched and piecework matter?"

"Is!" cried Wilhelm; "but *must* it ever be so? Must everything that is continue? Convince me not

that you are right, for no power on earth should force me to abide by any contract which I had concluded with the grossest misconceptions."

Serlo gave a merry turn to the business, and persuaded Wilhelm to review once more the many conversations they had had together about "Hamlet," and himself to invent some means of properly reforming the piece.

After a few days, which he had spent alone, our friend returned with a cheerful look. "I am much mistaken," cried he, "if I have not now discovered how the whole is to be managed: nay, I am convinced that Shakespeare himself would have arranged it so, had not his mind been too exclusively directed to the ruling interest, and perhaps misled by the novels which furnished him with his materials."

"Let us hear," said Serlo, placing himself with an air of solemnity upon the sofa: "I will listen calmly, but judge with rigour."

"I am not afraid of you," said Wilhelm: "only hear me. In the composition of this play, after the most accurate investigation and the most mature reflection, I distinguish two classes of objects. The first are the grand internal relations of the persons and events, the powerful effects which arise from the characters and proceedings of the main figures: these, I hold, are individually excellent; and the order in which they are presented cannot be improved. No kind of interference must be suffered to destroy them, or even essentially to change their form. These are the things which stamp themselves deep into the soul, which all men long to see, which no one dares to meddle with. Accordingly, I understand, they have almost wholly been retained in all our German theatres. But our countrymen have erred, in my opinion, with regard to the second class of objects, which may be observed in this tragedy: I allude to the external relations of the per-

sons, whereby they are brought from place to place, or combined in various ways, by certain accidental incidents. These they have looked upon as very unimportant; have spoken of them only in passing, or left them out altogether. Now, indeed, it must be owned, these threads are slack and slender; yet they run through the entire piece, and bind together much that would otherwise fall asunder, and does actually fall asunder, when you cut them off, and imagine you have done enough and more, if you have left the ends hanging.

"Among these external relations I include the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the embassy to his uncle, the settling of that feud, the march of young Fortinbras to Poland, and his coming back at the end; of the same sort are Horatio's return from Wittenberg, Hamlet's wish to go thither, the journey of Laertes to France, his return, the despatch of Hamlet into England, his capture by pirates, the death of the two courtiers by the letter which they carried. All these circumstances and events would be very fit for expanding and lengthening a novel; but here they injure exceedingly the unity of the piece, particularly as the hero has no plan, and are, in consequence, entirely out of place."

"For once in the right!" cried Serlo.

"Do not interrupt me," answered Wilhelm: "perhaps you will not always think me right. These errors are like temporary props of an edifice: they must not be removed till we have built a firm wall in their stead. My project, therefore, is, not at all to change those first-mentioned grand situations, or at least as much as possible to spare them, both collectively and individually; but with respect to these external, single, dissipated, and dissipating motives, to cast them all at once away, and substitute a solitary one instead of them."

"And this?" inquired Serlo, springing up from his recumbent posture.

"It lies in the piece itself," answered Wilhelm, "only I employ it rightly. There are disturbances in Norway. You shall hear my plan, and try it.

"After the death of Hamlet the father, the Norwegians, lately conquered, grow unruly. The viceroy of that country sends his son, Horatio, an old school friend of Hamlet's, and distinguished above every other for his bravery and prudence, to Denmark, to press forward the equipment of the fleet, which, under the new luxurious king, proceeds but slowly. Horatio has known the former king, having fought in his battles, having even stood in favour, with him — a circumstance by which the first ghost scene will be nothing injured. The new sovereign gives Horatio audience, and sends Laertes into Norway with intelligence that the fleet will soon arrive; whilst Horatio is commissioned to accelerate the preparation of it: and the Queen, on the other hand, will not consent that Hamlet, as he wishes, should go to sea along with him."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Serlo: "we shall now get rid of Wittenberg and the university, which was always a sorry piece of business. I think your idea extremely good; for, except these two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, the spectator will not be required to *fancy* anything: the rest he will *see;* the rest takes place before him; whereas, his imagination, on the other plan, was hunted over all the world."

"You easily perceive," said Wilhelm, "how I shall contrive to keep the other parts together. When Hamlet tells Horatio of his uncle's crime, Horatio counsels him to go to Norway in his company, to secure the affections of the army, and return in warlike force. Hamlet also is becoming dangerous to the King and Queen; they find no readier method of deliverance, than to send him in the fleet, with Rosen-

crantz and Guildenstern to be spies upon him; and, as Laertes in the meantime comes from France, they determine that this youth, exasperated even to murder, shall go after him. Unfavourable winds detain the fleet: Hamlet returns; for his wandering through the churchyard, perhaps some lucky motive may be thought of; his meeting with Laertes in Ophelia's grave is a grand moment, which we must not part with. After this, the King resolves that it is better to get quit of Hamlet on the spot: the festival of his departure, the pretended reconcilement with Laertes, are now solemnised; on which occasion knightly sports are held, and Laertes fights with Hamlet. Without the four corpses, I cannot end the play: no one must survive. The right of popular election now again comes in force; and Hamlet, while dying, gives his vote to Horatio."

"Quick! quick!" said Serlo, "sit down and work the play: your plan has my entire approbation; only let not your zeal evaporate.

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM had already been for some time busied with translating "Hamlet;" making use, as he laboured, of Wieland's spirited performance, through which he had first become acquainted with Shakespeare. What had been omitted in Wieland's work he replaced, and had secured a complete version, at the very time when Serlo and he were pretty well agreed about the way of treating it. He now began, according to his plan, to cut out and insert, to separate and unite, to alter, and often to restore; for, satisfied as he was with his own conception, it still appeared to him as if, in executing it, he were but spoiling the original."

When all was finished, he read his work to Serlo and the rest. They declared themselves exceedingly contented with it: Serlo, in particular, made many flattering observations.

"You have felt very justly," said he, among other things, "that some external circumstances must accompany this play, but that they must be simpler than those which the great poet has employed. What takes place without the theatre, what the spectator does not see, but must imagine, is like a background, in front of which the acting figures move. Your large and simple prospect of the fleet and Norway will do much to improve the play; if this were altogether taken from it, we should have but a family scene remaining; and the great idea, that here a kingly house, by internal crimes and incongruities, goes down to ruin, would not be presented with its proper dignity. But if the former background were left standing, so manifold, so

fluctuating and confused, it would hurt the impression of the figures."

Wilhelm again took Shakespeare's part; alleging that he wrote for islanders, for Englishmen, who generally, in the distance, were accustomed to see little else than ships and voyages, the coast of France and privateers; and thus what perplexed and distracted others was to them quite natural.

Serlo assented; and both were of opinion, that, as the play was now to be produced upon the German stage, this more serious and simple background was the best adapted for the German mind.

The parts had been distributed before: Serlo undertook Polonius; Aurelia, Ophelia; Laertes was already designated by his name; a young, thick-set, jolly newcomer was to be Horatio; the King and Ghost alone occasioned some perplexity, for both of these no one but Old Boisterous remaining. Serlo proposed to make the Pedant, King; but against this our friend protested in the strongest terms. They could resolve on nothing.

Wilhelm had also allowed both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to continue in his play. "Why not compress them into one?" said Serlo. "This abbreviation will not cost you much."

"Heaven keep me from all such curtailments!" answered Wilhelm: "they destroy at once the sense and the effect. What these two persons are and do it is impossible to represent by one. In such small matters we discover Shakespeare's greatness. These soft approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity, — how can they be expressed by a single man? There ought to be at least a dozen of these people, if they could be had; for it is only in society that they are anything;

they are society itself; and Shakespeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them. Besides, I need them as a couple that may be contrasted with the single, noble, excellent Horatio."

"I understand you," answered Serlo, "and we can arrange it. One of them we shall hand over to Elmira, Old Boisterous's eldest daughter: it will all be right, if they look well enough; and I will deck and trim the puppets so that it shall be first-rate fun to behold them."

Philina was rejoicing not a little, that she had to act the Duchess in the small subordinate play. "I will show it so natural," cried she, "how you wed a second husband, without loss of time, when you have loved the first immensely. I mean to win the loudest plaudits, and every man shall wish to be the third."

Aurelia gave a frown: her spleen against Philina was increasing every day.

"'Tis a pity, I declare," said Serlo, "that we have no ballet; else you should dance me a *pas de deux* with your first, and then another with your second husband, — and the first might dance himself to sleep by the measure; and your bits of feet and ankles would look so pretty, tripping to and fro upon the side stage."

"Of my ankles you do not know much," replied she pertly; "and as to my bits of feet," cried she, hastily reaching below the table, pulling off her slippers, and holding them together out to Serlo, "here are the cases of them; and I challenge you to find me more dainty ones."

"I was in earnest," said he, looking at the elegant half-shoes. "In truth, one does not often meet with anything so dainty."

They were of Parisian workmanship: Philina had received them as a present from the countess, a lady whose foot was celebrated for its beauty.

"A charming thing!" cried Serlo: "my heart leaps at the sight of them."

"What gallant throbs!" replied Philina.

"There is nothing in the world beyond a pair of slippers," said he, "of such pretty manufacture, in their proper time and place, when"—

Philina took her slippers from his hand, crying, "You have squeezed them all! They are far too wide for me!" She played with them, and rubbed the soles of them together. "How hot it is!" cried she, clapping the sole upon her cheek, then again rubbing, and holding it to Serlo. He was innocent enough to stretch out his hand to feel the warmth. "Clip! clap!" cried she, giving him a smart rap over the knuckles with the heel; so that he screamed, and drew back his hand. "That's for indulging in thoughts of your own at the sight of my slippers."

"And that's for using old folk like children," cried the other; then sprang up, seized her, and plundered many a kiss, every one of which she artfully contested with a show of serious reluctance. In this romping, her long hair got loose, and floated around the group; the chair overset; and Aurelia, inwardly indignant at such rioting, arose in great vexation.

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGH in this remoulding of "Hamlet" many characters had been cut off, a sufficient number of them still remained, — a number which the company was scarcely adequate to meet.

"If this is the way of it," said Serlo, "our prompter himself must issue from his den, and mount the stage, and become a personage like one of us."

"In his own station," answered Wilhelm, "I have frequently admired him."

"I do not think," said Serlo, "that there is in the world a more perfect artist of his kind. No spectator ever hears him: we upon the stage catch every syllable. He has formed in himself, as it were, a peculiar set of vocal organs for this purpose: he is like a genius that whispers intelligibly to us in the hour of need. He feels, as if by instinct, what portion of his task an actor is completely master of, and anticipates from afar where his memory will fail him. I have known cases in which I myself had scarcely read my part: he said it over to me word for word, and I played happily. Yet he has some peculiarities which would make another in his place quite useless. For example, he takes such an interest in the plays, that, in giving any moving passage, he does not indeed declaim it, but he reads it with all pomp and pathos. By this ill habit he has nonplussed me on more than one occasion."

"As with another of his singularities," observed Aurelia, "he once left me sticking fast in a very dangerous passage."

"How could this happen, with the man's attentiveness?" said Wilhelm.

"He is so affected," said Aurelia, "by certain passages, that he weeps warm tears, and for a few moments loses all reflection; and it is not properly passages such as we should call affecting that produce this impression on him; but, if I express myself clearly, the *beautiful* passages, those out of which the pure spirit of the poet looks forth, as it were, through open, sparkling eyes, — passages which others at most rejoice over, and which many thousands altogether overlook."

"And with a soul so tender, why does he never venture on the stage?"

"A hoarse voice," said Serlo, "and a stiff carriage, exclude him from it; as his melancholic temper excludes him from society. What trouble have I taken, and in vain, to make him take to me! But he is a charming reader; such another I have never heard; no one can observe like him the narrow limit between declamation and graceful recital."

"The very man!" exclaimed our friend, "the very man! What a fortunate discovery! We have now the proper hand for delivering the passage of 'The rugged Pyrrhus.'"

"One requires your eagerness," said Serlo, "before he can employ every object in the use it was meant for."

"In truth," said Wilhelm, "I was very much afraid we should be obliged to leave this passage out: the omission would have lamed the whole play."

"Well! That is what I cannot understand," observed Aurelia.

"I hope you will erelong be of my opinion," answered Wilhelm. "Shakespeare has introduced these travelling players with a double purpose. The person who recites the death of Priam with such feeling, in the *first* place, makes a deep impression

on the prince himself; he sharpens the conscience of the wavering youth: and, accordingly, this scene becomes a prelude to that other, where, in the *second* place, the little play produces such effect upon the King. Hamlet sees himself reproved and put to shame by the player, who feels so deep a sympathy in foreign and fictitious woes; and the thought of making an experiment upon the conscience of his stepfather is in consequence suggested to him. What a royal monologue is that, which ends the second act! How charming it will be to speak it.

"'Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?'"

"If we can but persuade our man to come upon the stage," observed Aurelia.

"We must lead him to it by degrees," said Serlo. "At the rehearsal he may read the passage: we shall tell him that an actor whom we are expecting is to play it; and so, by and by, we shall lead him nearer to the point."

Having agreed on this affair, the conversation next turned upon the Ghost. Wilhelm could not bring himself to give the part of the living King to the Pedant, that so Old Boisterous might play the Ghost: he was of opinion that they ought to wait awhile; because some other actors had announced themselves, and among these it was probable they would find a fitter man.

We can easily conceive, then, how astonished Wilhelm must have been when, returning home that evening, he found a billet lying on his table, sealed with singular figures, and containing what follows:

"Strange youth! we know thou art in great perplexity. For thy 'Hamlet' thou canst hardly find men enough, not to speak of ghosts. Thy zeal deserves a miracle: miracles we cannot work, but somewhat marvellous shall happen. If thou have faith, the Ghost shall arise at the proper hour! Be of courage and keep firm! This needs no answer: thy determination will be known to us."

With this curious sheet he hastened back to Serlo, who read and reread it, and at last declared, with a thoughtful look, that it seemed a matter of some moment; that they must consider well and seriously whether they could risk it. They talked the subject over at some length; Aurelia was silent, only smiling now and then; and a few days after, when speaking of the incident again, she gave our friend, not obscurely, to understand that she held it all a joke of Serlo's. She desired him to cast away anxiety, and to expect the Ghost with patience.

Serlo, for most part, was in excellent humour: the actors that were going to leave him took all possible pains to play well, that their absence might be much regretted; and this, combined with the new-fangled zeal of the others, gave promise of the best results.

His intercourse with Wilhelm had not failed to exert some influence on him. He began to speak more about art: for, after all, he was a German; and Germans like to give themselves account of what they do. Wilhelm wrote down many of their conversations; which, as our narrative must not be so often interrupted here, we shall communicate to such of our readers as feel an interest in dramaturgic matters, by some other opportunity.

In particular, one evening, the manager was very merrry in speaking of the part of Polonius, and how he meant to take it up. "I engage," said he, "on this occasion, to present a very meritorious person in his best aspect. The repose and security of this old gentleman, his emptiness and his significance, his exterior gracefulness and interior meanness, his frankness and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceitful truth, I will introduce with all due elegance in their fit proportions. This respectable, gray-haired, enduring, time-serving half-knave, I will represent in the most courtly style: the occasional roughness and coarseness of our author's strokes will further me here. I will speak like a book when I am prepared beforehand, and like an ass when I utter the overflowings of my heart. I will be insipid and absurd enough to chime in with every one, and acute enough never to observe when people make a mock of me. I have seldom taken up a part with so much zeal and roguishness."

"Could I but hope as much from mine!" exclaimed Aurelia. "I have neither youth nor softness enough to be at home in this character. One thing alone I am too sure of, — the feeling that turns Ophelia's brain, I shall not want."

"We must not take the matter up so strictly," said our friend. "For my share, I am certain, that the wish to act the character of Hamlet has led me exceedingly astray, throughout my study of the play. And now, the more I look into the part, the more clearly do I see, that, in my whole form and physiognomy, there is not one feature such as Shakespeare meant for Hamlet. When I consider with what nicety the various circumstances are adapted to each other, I can scarcely hope to produce even a tolerable effect."

"You are entering on your new career with becoming conscientiousness," said Serlo. "The actor fits himself to his part as he can, and the part to him as it

must. But how has Shakespeare drawn his Hamlet? Is he so utterly unlike you?"

"In the first place," answered Wilhelm, "he is fair-haired."

"That I call far-fetched," observed Aurelia. "How do you infer that?"

"As a Dane, as a Northman, he is fair-haired and blue-eyed by descent."

"And you think Shakespeare had this in view?"

"I do not find it specially expressed; but, by comparison of passages, I think it incontestable. The fencing tires him; the sweat is running from his brow; and the Queen remarks, '*He's fat, and scant of breath.*' Can you conceive him to be otherwise than plump and fair-haired? Brown-complexioned people, in their youth, are seldom plump. And does not his wavering melancholy, his soft lamenting, his irresolute activity, accord with such a figure? From a dark-haired young man, you would look for more decision and impetuosity."

"You are spoiling my imagination," cried Aurelia: "away with your fat Hamlets! Do not set your well-fed prince before us! Give us rather any *succedaneum* that will move us, will delight us. The intention of the author is of less importance to us than our own enjoyment, and we need a charm that is adapted for us."

CHAPTER VII.

ONE evening a dispute arose among our friends about the novel and the drama, and which of them deserved the preference. Serlo said it was a fruitless and misunderstood debate: both might be superior in their kinds, only each must keep within the limits proper to it.

"About their limits and their kinds," said Wilhelm, "I confess myself not altogether clear."

"Who *is* so?" said the other; "and yet perhaps it were worth while to come a little closer to the business."

They conversed together long upon the matter; and, in fine, the following was nearly the result of their discussion:

"In the novel as well as in the drama, it is human nature and human action that we see. The difference between these sorts of fiction lies not merely in their outward form, — not merely in the circumstance that the personages of the one are made to speak, while those of the other have commonly their history narrated. Unfortunately many dramas are but novels, which proceed by dialogue; and it would not be impossible to write a drama in the shape of letters.

"But, in the novel, it is chiefly *sentiments* and *events* that are exhibited; in the drama, it is *characters* and *deeds*. The novel must go slowly forward; and the sentiments of the hero, by some means or another, must restrain the tendency of the whole to unfold itself and to conclude. The drama, on the other hand, must hasten; and the character of the hero must press

forward to the end: it does not restrain, but is restrained. The novel-hero must be suffering, — at least he must not in a high degree be active: in the dramatic one, we look for activity and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones himself, are, if not suffering, at least retarding, personages; and the incidents are all in some sort modelled by their sentiments. In the drama the hero models nothing by himself; all things withstand him; and he clears and casts away the hindrances from off his path, or else sinks under them."

Our friends were also of opinion, that, in the novel, some degree of scope may be allowed to chance, but that it must always be led and guided by the sentiments of the personages: on the other hand, that fate, which, by means of outward, unconnected circumstances, carries forward men, without their own concurrence, to unforeseen catastrophe, can have place only in the drama; that chance may produce pathetic situations, but never tragic ones; fate, on the other hand, ought always to be terrible, — and is, in the highest sense, tragic, when it brings into a ruinous concatenation the guilty man, and the guiltless that was unconcerned with him.

These considerations led them back to the play of "Hamlet," and the peculiarities of its composition. The hero in this case, it was observed, is endowed more properly with sentiments than with a character: it is events alone that push him on, and accordingly the play has in some measure the expansion of a novel. But as it is fate that draws the plan, as the story issues from a deed of terror, and the hero is continually driven forward to a deed of terror, the work is tragic in the highest sense, and admits of no other than a tragic end.

The book-rehearsal was now to take place, to which Wilhelm had looked forward as to a festival. Having

Panorama from the painting by Salmon.

"Every actor should train himself to recite."

Photogravure from the painting by Salinas.

previously collated all the parts, no obstacle on this side could oppose him. The whole of the actors were acquainted with the piece: he endeavoured to impress their minds with the importance of these book-rehearsals. "As you require," said he, "of every musical performer, that he shall, in some degree, be able to play from the book: so every actor, every educated man, should train himself to recite from the book, to catch immediately the character of any drama, any poem, any tale he may be reading, and exhibit it with grace and readiness. No committing to memory will be of service, if the actor have not, in the first place, penetrated into the sense and spirit of his author: the mere letter will avail him nothing."

Serlo declared that he would overlook all subsequent rehearsals, — the last rehearsal itself, — if justice were but done to these rehearsals from the book. "For, commonly," said he, "there is nothing more amusing than to hear an actor speak of study: it is as if freemasons were to talk of building."

The rehearsal passed according to their wishes; and we may assert, that the fame and favour which our company acquired afterward had their foundation in these few but well-spent hours.

"You did right, my friend," said Serlo, when they were alone, "in speaking to our fellow labourers so earnestly; and yet I am afraid they will scarcely fulfil your wishes."

"How so?" asked Wilhelm.

"I have noticed," answered Serlo, "that, as easily as you may set in motion the imaginations of men, gladly as they listen to your tales and fictions, it is yet very seldom that you find among them any touch of an imagination you can call productive. In actors this remark is strikingly exemplified. Any one of them is well content to undertake a beautiful, praiseworthy, brilliant part; and seldom will any one of them do

more than self-complacently transport himself into his hero's place, without in the smallest troubling his head whether other people view him so or not. But to seize with vivacity what the author's feeling was in writing; what portion of your individual qualities you must cast off, in order to do justice to a part; how, by your own conviction that you are become another man, you may carry with you the convictions of the audience; how, by the inward truth of your conceptive power, you can change these boards into a temple, this pasteboard into woods, — to seize and execute all this, is given to very few. That internal strength of soul, by which alone deception can be brought about; that lying truth, without which nothing will affect us rightly, — have, by most men, never even been imagined.

"Let us not, then, press too hard for spirit and feeling in our friends. The surest way is first coolly to instruct them in the sense and letter of the play, — if possible, to open their understandings. Whoever has the talent will then, of his own accord, eagerly adopt the spirited feeling and manner of expression; and those who have it not will at least be prevented from acting or reciting altogether falsely. And among actors, as indeed in all cases, there is no worse arrangement than for any one to make pretensions to the spirit of a thing, while the sense and letter of it are not ready and clear to him."

CHAPTER VIII.

COMING to the first stage-rehearsal very early, Wilhelm found himself alone upon the boards. The appearance of the place surprised him, and awoke the strangest recollections. A forest and village scene stood exactly represented as he once had seen it in the theatre of his native town. On that occasion also, a rehearsal was proceeding; and it was the morning when Mariana first confessed her love to him, and promised him a happy interview. The peasants' cottages resembled one another on the two stages, as they did in nature: the true morning sun, beaming through a half-closed window-shutter, fell upon a part of a bench ill joined to a cottage door; but unhappily it did not now enlighten Mariana's waist and bosom. He sat down, reflecting on this strange coincidence: he almost thought that perhaps on this very spot he would soon see her again. And, alas! the truth was nothing more, than that an afterpiece, to which this scene belonged, was at that time very often played upon the German stage.

Out of these meditations he was roused by the other actors, along with whom two amateurs, frequenters of the wardrobe and the stage, came in, and saluted Wilhelm with a show of great enthusiasm. One of these was in some degree attached to Frau Melina, but the other was entirely a lover of the art, and both were of the kind which a good company should always wish to have about it. It was difficult to say whether their love for the stage, or their knowledge of it, was the greater. They loved it too much to know it perfectly:

they knew it well enough to prize the good and to discard the bad. But, their inclination being so powerful, they could tolerate the mediocre; and the glorious joy which they experienced from the foretaste and the aftertaste of excellence surpassed expression. The mechanical department gave them pleasure, the intellectual charmed them; and so strong was their susceptibility, that even a discontinuous rehearsal afforded them a species of illusion. Deficiencies appeared in their eyes to fade away in distance: the successful touched them like an object near at hand. In a word, they were judges such as every artist wishes in his own department. Their favourite movement was from the side-scenes to the pit, and from the pit to the side-scenes; their happiest place was in the wardrobe; their busiest employment was in trying to improve the dress, position, recitation, gesture, of the actor; their liveliest conversation was on the effect produced by him; their most constant effort was to keep him accurate, active, and attentive, to do him service or kindness, and, without squandering, to procure for the company a series of enjoyments. The two had obtained the exclusive privilege of being present on the stage at rehearsals as well as exhibitions. In regard to "Hamlet," they had not in all points agreed with Wilhelm: here and there he had yielded; but, for most part, he had stood by his opinion: and, upon the whole, these discussions had been very useful in the forming of his taste. He showed both gentlemen how much he valued them; and they again predicted nothing less, from these combined endeavours, than a new epoch for the German theatre.

The presence of these persons was of great service during the rehearsals. In particular they laboured to convince our players, that, throughout the whole of their preparations, the posture and action, as they were intended ultimately to appear, should always be combined

with the words, and thus the whole be mechanically united by habit. In rehearsing a tragedy especially, they said, no common movement with the hands should be allowed: a tragic actor that took snuff in the rehearsal always frightened them; for, in all probability, on coming to the same passage in the exhibition, he would miss his pinch. Nay, on the same principles, they maintained that no one should rehearse in boots, if his part were to be played in shoes. But nothing, they declared, afflicted them so much as when the women, in rehearsing, stuck their hands into the folds of their gowns.

By the persuasion of our friends, another very good effect was brought about: the actors all began to learn the use of arms. Since military parts occur so frequently, said they, can anything look more absurd than men, without the smallest particle of discipline, trolling about the stage in captains' and majors' uniforms?

Wilhelm and Laertes were the first that took lessons of a subaltern: they continued their practising of fence with the greatest zeal.

Such pains did these two men take for perfecting a company which had so fortunately come together. They were thus providing for the future satisfaction of the public, while the public was usually laughing at their taste. People did not know what gratitude they owed our friends, particularly for performing one service, — the service of frequently impressing on the actor the fundamental point, that it was his duty to speak so loud as to be heard. In this simple matter, they experienced more opposition and repugnance than could have been expected. Most part maintained that they were heard well enough already; some laid the blame upon the building; others said, one could not yell and bellow, when one had to speak naturally, secretly, or tenderly.

Our two friends, having an immeasurable stock of patience, tried every means of undoing this delusion, of getting around this obstinate self-will. They spared neither arguments nor flatteries; and at last they reached their object, being aided not a little by the good example of Wilhelm. By him they were requested to sit down in the remotest corners of the house, and, every time they did not hear him perfectly, to rap on the bench with a key. He articulated well, spoke out in a measured manner, raised his tones gradually, and did not overcry himself in the most vehement passages. The rapping of the key was heard less and less every new rehearsal: by and by the rest submitted to the same operation, and at last it seemed rational to hope that the piece would be heard by every one in all the nooks of the house.

From this example we may see how desirous people are to reach their object in their own way; what need there often is of enforcing on them truths which are self-evident; and how difficult it may be to reduce the man who aims at effecting something to admit the primary conditions under which alone his enterprise is possible.

CHAPTER IX.

THE necessary preparations for scenery and dresses, and whatever else was requisite, were now proceeding. In regard to certain scenes and passages, our friend had whims of his own, which Serlo humoured, partly in consideration of their bargain, partly from conviction, and because he hoped by these civilities to gain Wilhelm, and to lead him according to his own purposes the more implicitly in time to come.

Thus, for example, the King and Queen were, at the first audience, to appear sitting on the throne, with the courtiers at the sides, and Hamlet standing undistinguished in the crowd. "Hamlet," said he, "must keep himself quiet: his sable dress will sufficiently point him out. He should rather shun remark than seek it. Not till the audience is ended, and the King speaks with him as with a son, should he advance, and allow the scene to take its course."

A formidable obstacle still remained, in regard to the two pictures which Hamlet so passionately refers to in the scene with his mother. "We ought," said Wilhelm, "to have both of them visible, at full length, in the bottom of the chamber, near the main door; and the former king must be clad in armour, like the Ghost, and hang at the side where it enters. I could wish that the figure held its right hand in a commanding attitude, were somewhat turned away, and, as it were, looked over its shoulder, that so it might perfectly resemble the Ghost at the moment when he issues from the door. It will produce a great effect, when at this

instant Hamlet looks upon the Ghost, and the Queen upon the picture. The stepfather may be painted in royal ornaments, but not so striking."

There were several other points of this sort, about which we shall, perhaps, elsewhere have opportunity to speak.

"Are you, then, inexorably bent on Hamlet's dying at the end?" inquired Serlo.

"How can I keep him alive," said Wilhelm, "when the whole play is pressing him to death? We have already talked at large on that matter."

"But the public wishes him to live."

"I will show the public any other complaisance; but, as to this, I cannot. We often wish that some gallant, useful man, who is dying of a chronical disease, might yet live longer. The family weep, and conjure the physician; but he cannot stay him: and no more than this physician can withstand the necessity of nature, can we give law to an acknowledged necessity of art. It is a false compliance with the multitude, to raise in them emotions which they *wish*, when these are not emotions which they *ought*, to feel."

"Whoever pays the cash," said Serlo, "may require the ware according to his liking."

"Doubtless, in some degree," replied our friend; "but a great public should be reverenced, not used as children are, when pedlers wish to hook the money from them. By presenting excellence to the people, you should gradually excite in them a taste and feeling for the excellent; and they will pay their money with double satisfaction when reason itself has nothing to object against this outlay. The public you may flatter, as you do a well-beloved child, to better, to enlighten, it; not as you do a pampered child of quality, to perpetuate the error you profit from."

In this manner various other topics were discussed relating to the question, What might still be changed

in the play, and what must of necessity remain untouched? We shall not enter further on those points at present; but, perhaps, at some future time we may submit this altered "Hamlet" itself to such of our readers as feel any interest in the subject.

CHAPTER X.

THE main rehearsal was at length concluded: it had lasted very long. Serlo and Wilhelm still found much to care for: notwithstanding all the time which had already been consumed in preparation, some highly necessary matters had been left to the very last moment.

Thus, the pictures of the kings, for instance, were not ready: and the scene between Hamlet and his mother, from which so powerful an effect was looked for, had a very helpless aspect, as the business stood; for neither Ghost nor painted image of him was at present forthcoming. Serlo made a jest of this perplexity: "We should be in a pretty scrape," said he, "if the Ghost were to decline appearing, and the guard had nothing to fight with but the air, and our prompter were obliged to speak the spirit's part from the side-scenes."

"We will not scare away our strange friend by unbelief," said Wilhelm: "doubtless at the proper season he will come, and astonish us as much as the spectators."

"Well, certainly," said Serlo, "I shall be a happy man to-morrow night, when once the play will have been acted. It costs us more arrangement than I dreamed of."

"But none of you," exclaimed Philina, "will be happier than I, little as my part disturbs me. Really, to hear a single subject talked of for ever and for ever, when, after all, there is nothing to come of it beyond an exhibition, which will be forgotten like so many hundred others, this is what I have not patience for. In Heaven's name, not so many *pros* and *cons!* The

guests you entertain have always something to object against the dinner; nay, if you could hear them talk of it at home, they cannot understand how it was possible to undergo so sad a business."

"Let me turn your illustration, pretty one, to my own advantage," answered Wilhelm. "Consider how much must be done by art and nature, by traffickers and tradesmen, before an entertainment can be given. How many years the stag must wander in the forest, the fish in the river or the sea, before they can deserve to grace our table! And what cares and consultations with her cooks and servants has the lady of the house submitted to! Observe with what indifference the people swallow the production of the distant vintager, the seaman, and the vintner, as if it were a thing of course. And ought these men to cease from labouring, providing, and preparing; ought the master of the house to cease from purchasing and laying up the fruit of their exertions, — because at last the enjoyment it affords is transitory? But no enjoyment can be transitory; the impression which it leaves is permanent: and what is done with diligence and effort communicates to the spectator a hidden force, of which we cannot say how far its influence may reach."

"'Tis all one to me," replied Philina: "only here again I must observe, that you men are constantly at variance with yourselves. With all this conscientious horror at curtailing Shakespeare, you have missed the finest thought there was in 'Hamlet'!"

"The finest?" cried our friend.

"Certainly the finest," said Philina: "the prince himself takes pleasure in it."

"And it is?" inquired Serlo.

"If you wore a wig," replied Philina, "I would pluck it very coolly off you; for I think you need to have your understanding opened."

The rest began to think what she could mean: the

conversation paused. The party arose; it was now grown late; they seemed about to separate. While they were standing in this undetermined mood, Philina all at once struck up a song, with a very graceful, pleasing tune:

"Sing me not with such emotion,
How the night so lonesome is:
Pretty maids, I've got a notion
It is the reverse of this.

"For as wife and man are plighted,
And the better half the wife;
So is night to day united:
Night's the better half of life.

"Can you joy in bustling daytime,
Day when none can get his will?
It is good for work, for haytime;
For much other it is ill.

"But when, in the nightly glooming,
Social lamp on table glows,
Face for faces dear illuming,
And such jest and joyance goes;

"When the fiery, pert young fellow,
Wont by day to run or ride,
Whispering now some tale would tell O,
All so gentle by your side;

"When the nightingale to lovers
Lovingly her songlet sings,
Which for exiles and sad rovers,
Like mere woe and wailing rings —

"With a heart how lightsome feeling,
Do ye count the kindly clock,
Which twelve times deliberate pealing,
Tells you none to-night shall knock!

"Therefore, on all fit occasions,
Mark it, maidens, what I sing:
Every day its own vexations,
And the night its joys, will bring."

She made a slight courtesy on concluding, and Serlo gave a loud "Bravo!" She scuttled off, and left the room with a teehee of laughter. They heard her singing and skipping as she went down-stairs.

Serlo passed into another room: Wilhelm bade Aurelia good night; but she continued looking at him for a few moments, and said:

"How I dislike that woman! Dislike her from my heart, and to her very slightest qualities! Those brown eyelashes, with her fair hair, which our brother thinks so charming, I cannot bear to look at; and that scar upon her brow has something in it so repulsive, so low and base, that I could recoil ten paces every time I meet her. She was lately telling as a joke, that her father, when she was a child, threw a plate at her head, of which this is the mark. It is well that she is marked in the eyes and brow, that those about her may be on their guard."

Wilhelm made no answer; and Aurelia went on, apparently with greater spleen:

"It is next to impossible for me to speak a kind, civil word to her, as deeply as I hate her with all her wheedling. Would that we were rid of her! And you, too, my friend, have a certain complaisance for the creature, a way of acting toward her, that grieves me to the soul, — an attention which borders on respect; which, by Heaven! she does not merit."

"Whatever she may be," replied our friend, "I owe her thanks. Her upbringing is to blame: to her natural character I would do justice."

"Character!" exclaimed Aurelia; "and do you think such a creature has a character? O you men! It is so like you! These are the women you deserve!"

"My friend, can you suspect me?" answered Wilhelm. "I will give account of every minute I have spent beside her."

"Come, come," replied Aurelia: "it is late, we will

not quarrel. All like each, and each like all! Good night, my friend! Good night, my sparkling bird-of-paradise!"

Wilhelm asked how he had earned this title.

"Another time," cried she; "another time. They say it has no feet, but hovers in the air, and lives on ether. That, however, is a story, a poetic fiction. Good night! Dream sweetly, if you are in luck!"

She proceeded to her room; and he, being left alone, made haste to his.

Half angrily he walked along his chamber to and fro. The jesting but decided tone of Aurelia had hurt him: he felt deeply how unjust she was. Could he treat Philina with unkindness or ill-nature? She had done no evil to him; but, for any love to her, he could proudly and confidently take his conscience to witness that it was not so.

On the point of beginning to undress, he was going forward to his bed to draw aside the curtains, when, not without extreme astonishment, he saw a pair of women's slippers lying on the floor before it. One of them was resting on its sole, the other on its edge. They were Philina's slippers: he recogniesd them but too well. He thought he noticed some disorder in the curtains; nay, it seemed as if they moved. He stood, and looked with unaverted eyes.

A new impulse, which he took for anger, cut his breath: after a short pause, he recovered, and cried in a firm tone:

"Come out, Philina! What do you mean by this? Where is your sense, your modesty? Are we to be the speech of the house to-morrow?"

Nothing stirred.

"I do not jest," continued he: "these pranks are little to my taste."

No sound! No motion!

Irritated and determined, he at last went forward

to the bed, and tore the curtains asunder. "Arise," said he, "if I am not to give you up my room to-night."

With great surprise, he found his bed unoccupied; the sheets and pillows in the sleekest rest. He looked around: he searched and searched, but found no traces of the rogue. Behind the bed, the stove, the drawers, there was nothing to be seen: he sought with great and greater diligence; a spiteful looker-on might have believed that he was seeking in the hope of finding.

All thought of sleep was gone. He put the slippers on his table; went past it, up and down; often paused before it; and a wicked sprite that watched him has asserted that our friend employed himself for several hours about these dainty little shoes; that he viewed them with a certain interest; that he handled them and played with them; and it was not till toward morning that he threw himself on the bed, without undressing, where he fell asleep amidst a world of curious fantasies.

He was still slumbering, when Serlo entered hastily. "Where are you?" cried he: "still in bed? Impossible! I want you in the theatre: we have a thousand things to do."

CHAPTER XI.

THE forenoon and the afternoon fled rapidly away. The playhouse was already full: our friend hastened to dress. It was not with the joy which it had given him when he first essayed it, that he now put on the garb of Hamlet: he only dressed that he might be in readiness. On his joining the women in the stage-room, they unanimously cried that nothing sat upon him right; the fine feather stood awry; the buckle of his belt did not fit: they began to slit, to sew, and piece together. The music started! Philina still objected somewhat to his ruff; Aurelia had much to say against his mantle. "Leave me alone, good people," cried he: "this negligence will make me liker Hamlet." The women would not let him go, but continued trimming him. The music ceased: the acting was begun. He looked at himself in the glass, pressed his hat closer down upon his face, and retouched the painting of his cheeks.

At this instant somebody came rushing in, and cried, "The Ghost! the Ghost!"

Wilhelm had not once had time all day to think of the Ghost, and whether it would come or not. His anxiety on that head was at length removed, and now some strange assistant was to be expected. The stage-manager came in, inquiring after various matters: Wilhelm had not time to ask about the Ghost; he hastened to present himself before the throne, where King and Queen, surrounded with their court, were already glancing in all the splendours of royalty, and

waiting till the scene in front of them should be concluded. He caught the last words of Horatio, who was speaking of the Ghost, in extreme confusion, and seemed to have almost forgotten his part.

The intermediate curtain went aloft, and Hamlet saw the crowded house before him. Horatio, having spoken his address, and been dismissed by the King, pressed through to Hamlet; and, as if presenting himself to the prince, he said, "The Devil is in harness: he has put us all in fright."

In the meanwhile, two men of large stature, in white cloaks and capouches, were observed standing in the side scenes. Our friend, in the distraction, embarrassment, and hurry of the moment, had failed in the first soliloquy; at least, such was his own opinion, though loud plaudits had attended his exit. Accordingly, he made his next entrance in no pleasant mood, with the dreary wintry feeling of dramatic condemnation. Yet he girded up his mind, and spoke that appropriate passage on the "rouse and wassail," the "heavy-headed revel" of the Danes, with suitable indifference; he had, like the audience, in thinking of it, quite forgotten the Ghost; and he started, in real terror, when Horatio cried out, "Look, my lord! it comes!" He whirled violently around; and the tall, noble figure, the low, inaudible tread, the light movement in the heavy-looking armour, made such an impression on him, that he stood as if transformed to stone, and could utter only in a half-voice his "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" He glared at the form, drew a deep breathing once or twice, and pronounced his address to the Ghost in a manner so confused, so broken, so constrained, that the highest art could not have hit the mark so well.

His translation of this passage now stood him in good stead. He had kept very close to the original, in which the arrangement of the words appeared to

him expressive of a mind confounded, terrified, and seized with horror:

"'Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: oh, answer me!'"

A deep effect was visible in the audience. The Ghost beckoned, the prince followed him amid the loudest plaudits.

The scene changed: and, when the two had reappeared, the Ghost, on a sudden, stopped, and turned around; by which means Hamlet came to be a little too close upon it. With a longing curiosity, he looked in at the lowered visor; but except two deep-lying eyes, and a well-formed nose, he could discern nothing. Gazing timidly, he stood before the Ghost; but when the first tones issued from the helmet, and a somewhat hoarse, yet deep and penetrating, voice, pronounced the words, "I am thy father's spirit," Wilhelm, shuddering, started back some paces; and the audience shuddered with him. Each imagined that he knew the voice: Wilhelm thought he noticed in it some resemblance to his father's. These strange emotions and remembrances, the curiosity he felt about discovering his secret friend, the anxiety about offending him, even the theatric impropriety of coming too near him in the present situation, all this affected Wilhelm with powerful and conflicting impulses. During the long speech of the Ghost, he changed his place so frequently, he seemed so unsettled and perplexed, so attentive and so absent-minded, that his acting caused a universal admiration, as the Spirit caused a universal horror. The latter spoke with a feeling of melancholy anger, rather than of sorrow;

but of an anger spiritual, slow, and inexhaustible. It was the mistemper of a noble soul, that is severed from all earthly things, and yet devoted to unbounded woe. At last he vanished, but in a curious manner; for a thin, gray, transparent gauze arose from the place of descent, like a vapour, spread itself over him, and sank along with him.

Hamlet's friends now entered, and swore upon the sword. Old Truepenny, in the meantime, was so busy underground, that, wherever they might take their station he was sure to call out right beneath them, "Swear!" and they started, as if the soil had taken fire below them, and hastened to another spot. On each of these occasions, too, a little flame pierced through at the place where they were standing. The whole produced on the spectators a profound impression.

After this, the play proceeded calmly on its course: nothing failed; all prospered; the audience manifested their contentment, and the actors seemed to rise in heart and spirits every scene.

CHAPTER XII.

THE curtain fell, and rapturous applauses sounded out of every corner of the house. The four princely corpses sprang aloft and embraced each other. Polonius and Ophelia likewise issued from their graves, and listened with extreme satisfaction, as Horatio, who had stepped before the curtain to announce the following play, was welcomed with the most thundering plaudits. The people would not hear of any other play, but violently required the repetition of the present.

"We have won," cried Serlo, "and so not another reasonable word this night! Everything depends on the first impression: we should never take it ill of any actor, that, on occasion of his first appearance, he is provident, and even self-willed."

The box-keeper came, and delivered him a heavy sum. "We have made a good beginning," cried the manager, "and prejudice itself will now be on our side. But where is the supper you promised us? To-night we may be allowed to relish it a little."

It had been agreed that all the party were to stay together in their stage dresses, and enjoy a little feast among themselves. Wilhelm had engaged to have the place in readiness, and Frau Melina to provide the victuals.

A room, which commonly was occupied by scene-painters, had accordingly been polished up as well as possible: our friends had hung it around with little decorations, and so decked and trimmed it, that it looked half like a garden, half like a colonnade. On enter-

ing it, the company were dazzled with the glitter of a multitude of lights, which, across the vapours of the sweetest and most copious perfumes, spread a stately splendour over a well-decorated and well-furnished table. These preparations were hailed with joyful interjections by the party; all took their places with a certain genuine dignity; it seemed as if some royal family had met together in the Kingdom of the Shades. Wilhelm sat between Aurelia and the Frau Melina; Serlo between Philina and Elmira; nobody was discontented with himself or with his place.

Our two theatric amateurs, who had from the first been present, now increased the pleasure of the meeting. While the exhibition was proceeding, they had several times stepped around, and come upon the stage, expressing, in the warmest terms, the delight which they and the audience felt. They now descended to particulars, and each was richly rewarded for his efforts.

With boundless animation, the company extolled man after man, and passage after passage. To the prompter, who had modestly sat down at the bottom of the table, they gave a liberal commendation for his "rugged Pyrrhus;" the fencing of Hamlet and Laertes was beyond all praise; Ophelia's mourning had been inexpressibly exalted and affecting; of Polonius they would not trust themselves to speak.

Every individual present heard himself commended through the rest and by them, nor was the absent Ghost defrauded of his share of praise and admiration. He had played the part, it was asserted, with a very happy voice, and in a lofty style; but what surprised them most, was the information which he seemed to have about their own affairs. He entirely resembled the painted figure, as if he had sat to the painter of it; and the two amateurs described, in glowing language, how awful it had looked when the spirit entered near

the picture, and stepped across before his own image. Truth and error, they declared, had been commingled in the strangest manner: they had felt as if the Queen really did not see the Ghost. And Frau Melina was especially commended, because on this occasion she had gazed upwards at the picture, while Hamlet was pointing downwards at the Spectre.

Inquiry was now made how the apparition could have entered. The stage-manager reported that a back door, usually blocked up by decorations, had that evening, as the Gothic hall was occupied, been opened; that two large figures in white cloaks and hoods, one of whom was not to be distinguished from the other, had entered by this passage; and by the same, it was likely, they had issued when the third act was over.

Serlo praised the Ghost for one merit, — that he had not whined and lamented like a tailor; nay, to animate his son, had even introduced a passage at the end, which more beseemed such a hero. Wilhelm had kept it in memory: he promised to insert it in his manuscript.

Amid the pleasures of the entertainment, it had not been noticed that the children and the harper were absent. Erelong they made their entrance, and were blithely welcomed by the company. They came in together, very strangely decked: Felix was beating a triangle, Mignon a tambourine; the old man had his large harp hung round his neck, and was playing on it whilst he carried it before him. They marched round and round the table, and sang a multitude of songs. Eatables were handed them; and the guests seemed to think they could not do a greater kindness to the children, than by giving them as much sweet wine as they chose to have. For the company themselves had not by any means neglected a stock of savoury flasks, presented by the two amateurs, which had arrived that evening in baskets. The children tripped about, and

sang: Mignon, in particular, was frolicsome beyond all wont. She beat the tambourine with the greatest liveliness and grace: now, with her finger pressed against the parchment, she hummed across it swiftly to and fro; now rattled on it with her knuckles, now with the back of her hand; nay, sometimes, with alternating rhythm, she struck it first against her knee and then against her head; and anon twirling it in her hand, she made the shells jingle by themselves; and thus, from the simplest instrument, elicited a great variety of tones. After she and Felix had long rioted about, they sat down upon an elbow-chair which was standing empty at the table, exactly opposite to Wilhelm.

"Keep out of the chair!" cried Serlo: "it is waiting for the Ghost, I think; and, when he comes, it will be worse for you."

"I do not fear him," answered Mignon: "if he come, we can rise. He is my uncle, and will not harm me." To those who did not know that her reputed father had been named the Great Devil, this speech was unintelligible.

The party looked at one another: they were more and more confirmed in their suspicion that the manager was in the secret of the Ghost. They talked and tippled, and the girls from time to time cast timid glances toward the door.

The children, who, sitting in the big chair, looked from over the table but like puppets in their box, did actually at length start a little drama in the style of Punch. The screeching tone of these people Mignon imitated very well; and Felix and she began to knock their heads together, and against the edges of the table, in such a way as only wooden puppets could endure. Mignon, in particular, grew frantic with gaiety: the company, much as they had laughed at her at first, were in fine obliged to curb her. But persuasion was of small avail; for she now sprang up, and raved, and

shook her tambourine, and capered round the table. With her hair flying out behind her, with her head thrown back, and her limbs, as it were, cast into the air, she seemed like one of those antique Mænads, whose wild and all but impossible positions still, on classic monuments, often strike us with amazement.

Incited by the talents and the uproar of the children, each endeavoured to contribute something to the entertainment of the night. The girls sung several canons; Laertes whistled in the manner of a nightingale; and the Pedant gave a symphony *pianissimo* upon the jew's-harp. Meanwhile the youths and damsels, who sat near each other, had begun a great variety of games; in which, as the hands often crossed and met, some pairs were favoured with a transient squeeze, the emblem of a hopeful kindness. Madam Melina in particular seemed scarcely to conceal a decided tenderness for Wilhelm. It was late; and Aurelia, perhaps the only one retaining self-possession in the party, now stood up, and signified that it was time to go.

By way of termination, Serlo gave a firework, or what resembled one; for he could imitate the sound of crackers, rockets, and firewheels, with his mouth, in a style of nearly inconceivable correctness. You had only to shut your eyes, and the deception was complete. In the meantime, they had all risen: the men gave their arms to the women to escort them home. Wilhelm was walking last with Aurelia. The stage-manager met him on the stairs, and said to him, "Here is the veil our Ghost vanished in; it was hanging fixed to the place where he sank; we found it this moment." "A curious relic!" said our friend, and took it with him.

At this instant his left arm was laid hold of, and he felt a smart twinge of pain in it. Mignon had hid herself in the place: she had seized him, and bit his arm. She rushed past him, down-stairs, and disappeared.

On reaching the open air, almost all of them discovered that they had drunk too liberally. They glided asunder without taking leave.

The instant Wilhelm gained his room, he stripped, and, extinguishing his candle, hastened into bed. Sleep was overpowering him without delay, when a noise, that seemed to issue from behind the stove, aroused him. In the eye of his heated fancy, the image of the harnessed king was hovering there: he sat up that he might address the Spectre: but he felt himself encircled with soft arms, and his mouth was shut with kisses, which he had not force to push away.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT morning Wilhelm started up with an unpleasant feeling, and found himself alone. His head was still dim with the tumult, which he had not yet entirely slept off; and the recollection of his nightly visitant disquieted his mind. His first suspicion lighted on Philina; but, on second thoughts, he conceived that it could not have been she. He sprang out of bed: and, while putting on his clothes, he noticed that the door, which commonly he used to bolt, was now ajar; though whether he had shut it on the previous night, or not, he could not recollect.

But what surprised him most was the Spirit's veil, which he found lying on his bed. Having brought it up with him, he had most probably thrown it there himself. It was a gray gauze: on the hem of it he noticed an inscription broidered in dark letters. He unfolded it, and read the words, "FOR THE FIRST AND THE LAST TIME! FLEE, YOUTH! FLEE!" He was struck with it, and knew not what to think or say.

At this moment Mignon entered with his breakfast. The aspect of the child astonished Wilhelm, we may almost say frightened him. She appeared to have grown taller over night: she entered with a stately, noble air, and looked him in the face so earnestly, that he could not endure her glances. She did not touch him, as at other times, when, for morning salutation, she would press his hand, or kiss his cheek, his lips, his arm, or shoulder; but, having put his things in order, she retired in silence.

The appointed time of a first rehearsal now arrived:

our friends assembled, all of them entirely out of tune from yesternight's debauch. Wilhelm roused himself as much as possible, that he might not at the very outset violate the principles he had preached so lately with such emphasis. His practice in the matter helped him through; for practice and habit must, in every art, fill up the voids which genius and temper in their fluctuations will so often leave.

But, in the present case, our friends had especial reason to admit the truth of the remark, that no one should begin with a festivity any situation that is meant to last, particularly that is meant to be a trade, a mode of living. Festivities are fit for what is happily concluded: at the commencement, they but waste the force and zeal which should inspire us in the struggle, and support us through a long-continued labour. Of all festivities, the marriage festival appears the most unsuitable: calmness, humility, and silent hope befit no ceremony more than this.

So passed the day, which to Wilhelm seemed the most insipid he had ever spent. Instead of their accustomed conversation in the evening, the company began to yawn: the interest of Hamlet was exhausted; they rather felt it disagreeable than otherwise that the play was to be repeated next night. Wilhelm showed the veil which the royal Dane had left: it was to be inferred from this, that he would not come again. Serlo was of that opinion; he appeared to be deep in the secrets of the Ghost: but, on the other hand, the inscription, "Flee, youth! Flee!" seemed inconsistent with the rest. How could Serlo be in league with any one whose aim it was to take away the finest actor of his troop?

It had now become a matter of necessity to confer on Boisterous the Ghost's part, and on the Pedant that of the King. Both declared that they had studied these sufficiently: nor was it wonderful; for in such a

number of rehearsals, and so copious a treatment of the subject, all of them had grown familiar with it: each could have exchanged his part with any other. Yet they rehearsed a little here and there, and prepared the new adventurers, as fully as the hurry would admit. When the company was breaking up at a pretty late hour, Philina softly whispered Wilhelm as she passed, "I must have my slippers back: thou wilt not bolt the door?" These words excited some perplexity in Wilhelm, when he reached his chamber; they strengthened the suspicion that Philina was the secret visitant: and we ourselves are forced to coincide with this idea; particularly as the causes, which awakened in our friend another and a stranger supposition, cannot be disclosed. He kept walking up and down his chamber in no quiet frame: his door was actually not yet bolted.

On a sudden Mignon rushed into the room, laid hold of him, and cried, "Master! save the house! It is on fire!" Wilhelm sprang through the door, and a strong smoke came rushing down upon him from the upper story. On the street he heard the cry of fire; and the harper, with his instrument in his hand, came downstairs breathless through the smoke. Aurelia hurried out of her chamber, and threw little Felix into Wilhelm's arms.

"Save the child!" cried she, "and we will mind the rest."

Wilhelm did not look upon the danger as so great: his first thought was, to penetrate to the source of the fire, and try to stifle it before it reached a head. He gave Felix to the harper; commanding him to hasten down the stone stairs, which led across a little garden-vault out into the garden, and to wait with the children in the open air. Mignon took a light to show the way. He begged Aurelia to secure her things there also. He himself pierced upwards through the

smoke, but it was in vain that he exposed himself to such danger. The flame appeared to issue from a neighbouring house; it had already caught the wooden floor and staircase; some others, who had hastened to his help, were suffering like himself from fire and vapour. Yet he kept inciting them; he called for water; he conjured them to dispute every inch with the flame, and promised to abide by them to the last. At this instant, Mignon came springing up, and cried, "Master! save thy Felix! The old man is mad! He is killing him." Scarcely knowing what he did, Wilhelm darted down-stairs; and Mignon followed close behind him.

On the last steps, which led into the garden-vault, he paused with horror. Some heaps of fire-wood branches, and large masses of straw, which had been stowed in the place, were burning with a clear flame; Felix was lying on the ground, and screaming; the harper stood aside, holding down his head, and leaned against the wall. "Unhappy creature! what is this?" said Wilhelm. The old man spoke not; Mignon lifted Felix, and carried him with difficulty to the garden; while Wilhelm strove to pull the fire asunder and extinguish it, but only by his efforts made the flame more violent. At last he, too, was forced to flee into the garden, with his hair and his eyelashes burned; tearing the harper with him through the conflagration, who, with singed beard, unwillingly accompanied him.

Wilhelm hastened instantly to seek the children. He found them on the threshold of a summer-house at some distance: Mignon was trying every effort to pacify her comrade. Wilhelm took him on his knee: he questioned him, felt him, but could obtain no satisfactory account from either him or Mignon.

Meanwhile, the fire had fiercely seized on several houses: it was now enlightening all the neighbourhood. Wilhelm looked at the child in the red glare

of the flames: he could find no wound, no blood, no hurt of any kind. He groped over all the little creature's body, but the boy gave no sign of pain: on the contrary, he by degrees grew calm, and began to wonder at the blazing houses, and express his pleasure at the spectacle of beams and rafters burning all in order, like a grand illumination, so beautifully there.

Wilhelm thought not of the clothes or goods he might have lost: he felt deeply how inestimable to him was this pair of human beings, who had just escaped so great a danger. He pressed little Felix to his heart with a new emotion: Mignon, too, he was about to clasp with joyful tenderness; but she softly avoided this: she took him by the hand, and held it fast.

"Master," said she (till the present evening she had hardly ever named him master; at first she used to name him sir, and afterward to call him father),— "Master! we have escaped an awful danger: thy Felix was on the point of death."

By many inquiries, Wilhelm learned from her at last, that, when they came into the vault, the harper tore the light from her hand, and set on fire the straw. That he then put Felix down, laid his hands with strange gestures on the head of the child, and drew a knife as if he meant to sacrifice him. That she sprang forward, and snatched it from him; that she screamed; and some one from the house, who was carrying something down into the garden, came to her help, but must have gone away again in the confusion, and left the old man and the child alone.

Two or even three houses were now flaming in a general blaze. Owing to the conflagration in the vault, no person had been able to take shelter in the garden. Wilhelm was distressed about his friends, and in a less degree about his property. Not ventur-

ing to quit the children, he was forced to sit, and see the mischief spreading more and more.

In this anxious state he passed some hours. Felix had fallen asleep on his bosom: Mignon was lying at his side, and holding fast his hand. The efforts of the people finally subdued the fire. The burned houses sank, with successive crashes, into heaps; the morning was advancing; the children awoke, and complained of bitter cold; even Wilhelm, in his light dress, could scarcely brook the chillness of the falling dew. He took the young ones to the rubbish of the prostrate building, where, among the ashes and the embers, they found a very grateful warmth.

The opening day collected, by degrees, the various individuals of the party. All of them had got away unhurt: no one had lost much. Wilhelm's trunk was saved among the rest.

Toward ten o'clock Serlo called them to rehearse their "Hamlet," at least some scenes, in which fresh players were to act. He had some debates to manage, on this point, with the municipal authorities. The clergy required, that, after such a visitation of Providence, the playhouse should be shut for some time; and Serlo, on the other hand, maintained, that both for the purpose of repairing the damage he had suffered, and of exhilarating the depressed and terrified spirits of the people, nothing could be more in place than the exhibition of some interesting play. His opinion in the end prevailed, and the house was full. The actors played with singular fire, with more of a passionate freedom than at first. The feelings of the audience had been heightened by the horrors of the previous night, and their appetite for entertainment had been sharpened by the tedium of a wasted and dissipated day: every one had more than usual susceptibility for what was strange and moving. Most of them were new spectators, invited by the fame of the play: they could

not compare the present with the preceding evening. Boisterous played altogether in the style of the unknown Ghost: the Pedant, too, had accurately seized the manner of his predecessor; nor was his own woful aspect without its use to him; for it seemed as if, in spite of his purple cloak and his ermine collar, Hamlet were fully justified in calling him a "king of shreds and patches."

Few have ever reached the throne by a path more singular than his had been. But although the rest, and especially Philina, made sport of his preferment, he himself signified that the count, a consummate judge, had at the first glance predicted this and much more of him. Philina, on the other hand, recommended lowliness of mind to him; saying, she would now and then powder the sleeves of his coat, that he might remember that unhappy night in the castle, and wear his crown with meekness.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our friends had sought out other lodgings, on the spur of the moment, and were by this means much dispersed. Wilhelm had conceived a liking for the garden-house, where he had spent the night of the conflagration: he easily obtained the key, and settled himself there. But Aurelia being greatly hampered in her new abode, he was obliged to retain little Felix with him. Mignon, indeed, would not part with the boy.

He had placed the children in a neat chamber on the upper floor: he himself was in the lower parlour. The young ones were asleep at this time: Wilhelm could not sleep.

Adjoining the lovely garden, which the full moon had just risen to illuminate, the black ruins of the fire were visible; and here and there a streak of vapour was still mounting from them. The air was soft, the night extremely beautiful. Philina, in issuing from the theatre, had jogged him with her elbow, and whispered something to him, which he did not understand. He felt perplexed and out of humour: he knew not what he should expect or do. For a day or two Philina had avoided him: it was not till to-night that she had given him any second signal. Unhappily the doors, that he was not to bolt, were now consumed: the slippers had evaporated into smoke. How the girl would gain admission to the garden, if her aim was such, he knew not. He wished she might not come, and yet he longed to have some explanation with her.

But what lay heavier at his heart than this, was the

fate of the harper, whom, since the fire, no one had seen. Wilhelm was afraid, that, in clearing off the rubbish, they would find him buried under it. Our friend had carefully concealed the suspicion which he entertained, that it was the harper who had fired the house. The old man had been first seen, as he rushed from the burning and smoking floor, and his desperation in the vault appeared a natural consequence of such a deed. Yet, from the inquiry which the magistrates had instituted touching the affair, it seemed likely that the fire had not originated in the house where Wilhelm lived, but had accidentally been kindled in the third from that, and had crept along beneath the roofs before it burst into activity.

Seated in a grove, our friend was meditating all these things, when he heard a low footfall in a neighbouring walk. By the melancholy song which arose along with it, he recognised the harper. He caught the words of the song without difficulty: it turned on the consolations of a miserable man, conscious of being on the borders of insanity. Unhappily our friend forgot the whole of it except the last verse:

"Wheresoe'er my steps may lead me,
Meekly at the door I'll stay:
Pious hands will come to feed me,
And I'll wander on my way.
Each will feel a touch of gladness
When my aged form appears:
Each will shed a tear of sadness,
Though I reck not of his tears."

So singing, he had reached the garden door, which led into an unfrequented street. Finding it bolted, he was making an attempt to climb the railing, when Wilhelm held him back, and addressed some kindly words to him. The old man begged to have the door unlocked, declaring that he would and must escape.

Wilhelm represented to him that he might indeed escape from the garden, but could not from the town; showing, at the same time, what suspicions he must needs incur by such a step. But it was in vain: the old man held by his opinion. Our friend, however, would not yield; and at last he brought him, half by force, into the garden-house, in which he locked himself along with him. The two carried on a strange conversation; which, however, not to afflict our readers with repeating unconnected thoughts and dolorous emotions, we had rather pass in silence than detail at large.

CHAPTER XV.

UNDETERMINED what to do with this unhappy man, who displayed such indubitable symptoms of madness, Wilhelm would have been in great perplexity, had not Laertes come that very morning, and delivered him from his uncertainty. Laertes, as usual, rambling everywhere about the town, had happened, in some coffee-house, to meet with a man, who, a short time ago, had suffered under violent attacks of melancholy. This person, it appeared, had been entrusted to the care of some country clergyman, who made it his peculiar business to attend to people in such situations. In the present instance, as in many others, his treatment had succeeded: he was still in town, and the friends of the patient were showing him the greatest honour.

Wilhelm hastened to find out this person: he disclosed the case to him, and agreed with him about the terms. The harper was to be brought over to him, under certain pretexts. The separation deeply pained our friend; so used was he to see the man beside him, and to hear his spirited and touching strains. The hope of soon beholding him recovered, served, in some degree, to moderate this feeling. The old man's harp had been destroyed in the burning of the house: they purchased him another, and gave it him when he departed.

Mignon's little wardrobe had in like manner been consumed. As Wilhelm was about providing her with new apparel, Aurelia proposed that now at last they should dress her as a girl.

"No! no! not at all!" cried Mignon, and insisted

on it with such earnestness, that they let her have her way.

The company had not much leisure for reflection: the exhibitions followed close on one another.

Wilhelm often mingled with the audience, to ascertain their feelings; but he seldom heard a criticism of the kind he wished: more frequently the observations he listened to distressed or angered him. Thus, for instance, shortly after "Hamlet" had been acted for the first time, a youth was telling, with considerable animation, how happy he had been that evening in the playhouse. Wilhelm hearkened, and was scandalised to learn that his neighbour had, on that occasion, in contempt of those behind him, kept his hat on, stubbornly refusing to remove it till the play was done; to which heroical transaction he still looked back with great contentment.

Another gentleman declared that Wilhelm played Laertes very well, but that the actor who had undertaken Hamlet did not seem too happy in *his* part. This permutation was not quite unnatural; for Wilhelm and Laertes did resemble one another, though in a very distant manner.

A third critic warmly praised his acting, particularly in the scene with his mother; only he regretted much, that, in this fiery moment, a white strap had peered out from below the Prince's waistcoat, whereby the illusion had been greatly marred.

Meanwhile, in the interior of the company, a multitude of alterations were occurring. Philina, since the evening subsequent to that of the fire, had never given our friend the smallest sign of closer intimacy. She had, as it seemed on purpose, hired a remote lodging: she associated with Elmira, and came seldomer to Serlo, — an arrangement very gratifying to Aurelia. Serlo continued still to like her, and often visited her quarters, particularly when he hoped to find Elmira there.

One evening he took Wilhelm with him. At their entrance, both of them were much surprised to see Philina, in the inner room, sitting in close contact with a young officer. He wore a red uniform with white pantaloons; but, his face being turned away, they could not see it Philina came into the outer room to meet her visitors, and shut the door behind her. "You surprise me in the middle of a very strange adventure," cried she.

"It does not appear so strange," said Serlo; "but let us see this handsome, young, enviable gallant. You have us in such training, that we dare not show any jealousy, however it may be."

"I must leave you to suspicion for a time," replied Philina in a jesting tone; "yet I can assure you, the gallant is a lady of my friends, who wishes to remain a few days undiscovered. You shall know her history in due season; nay, perhaps you shall even behold the beautiful spinster in person; and then most probably I shall have need of all my prudence and discretion, for it seems too likely that your new acquaintance will drive your old friend out of favour."

Wilhelm stood as if transformed to stone. At the first glance, the red uniform had reminded him of Mariana: the figure, too, was hers; the fair hair was hers; only the present individual seemed to be a little taller.

"For Heaven's sake," cried he, "let us know something more about your friend! let us see this lady in disguise! We are now partakers of your secret: we will promise, we will swear; only let us see the lady!"

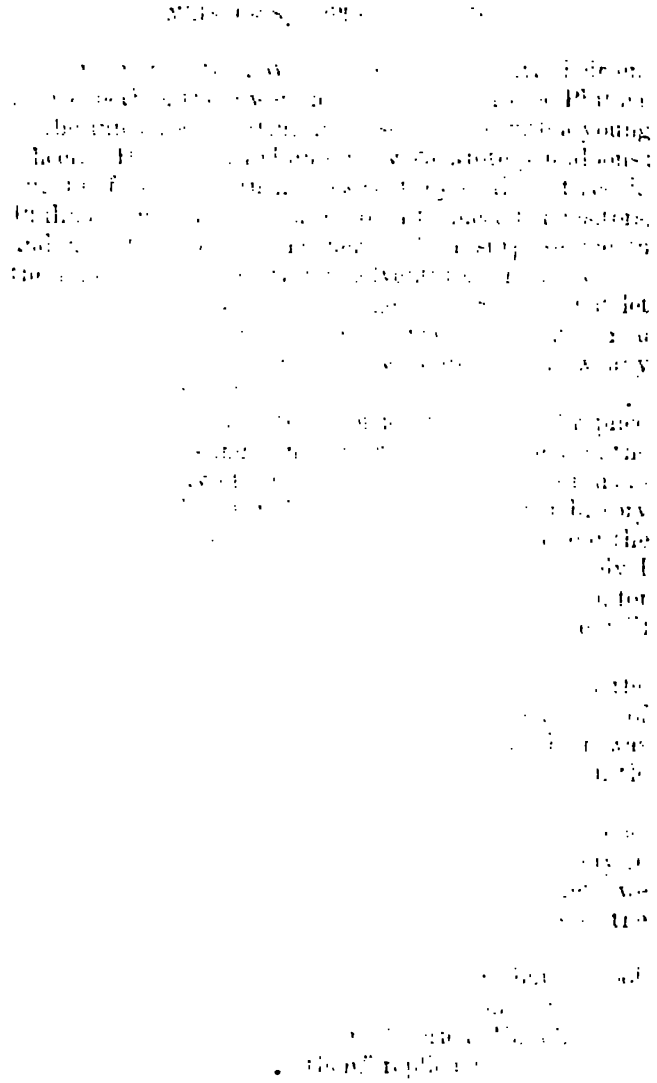
"What a fire he is in!" cried Philina: "but be cool, be calm; for to-day there will nothing come of it."

"Let us only know her name!" cried Wilhelm.

"It were a fine secret, then," replied Philina.

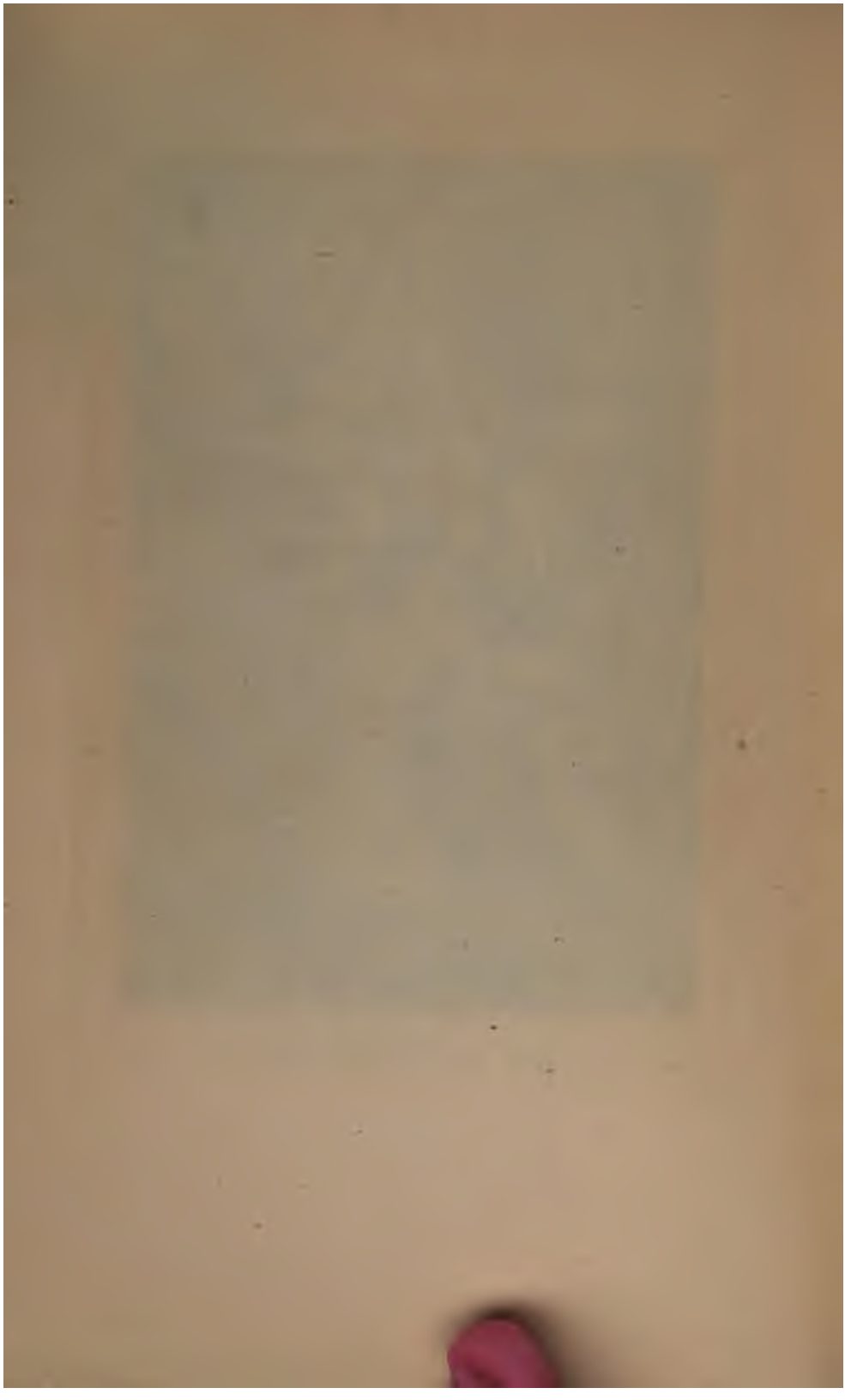
"At least her first name!"

"If you can guess it, be it so. Three guesses I will



"Wilhelm suddenly threw himself at Philina's feet"

Photogravure from the painting by Leloir



give you, — not a fourth. You might lead me through the whole calendar."

"Well!" said Wilhelm: "Cecilia, then?"

"None of your Cecilias!"

"Henrietta?"

"Not at all! Have a care I pray you: guess better, or your curiosity will have to sleep unsatisfied."

Wilhelm paused and shivered: he tried to speak, but the sound died away within him. "Mariana?" stammered he at last, "Mariana?"

"Bravo!" cried Philina. "Hit to a hair's-breadth!" said she, whirling round upon her heel, as she was wont on such occasions.

Wilhelm could not utter a word; and Serlo, not observing his emotion, urged Philina more and more to let them in.

Conceive the astonishment of both, when Wilhelm, suddenly and vehemently interrupting their raillery, threw himself at Philina's feet, and, with an air and tone of the deepest passion, begged and conjured her, "Let me see the stranger," cried he: "she is mine; she is my Mariana! She for whom I have longed all the days of my life, she who is still more to me than all the women in this world! Go in to her at least, and tell her that I am here, — that the man is here who linked to her his earliest love, and all the happiness of his youth. Say that he will justify himself, though he left her so unkindly; he will pray for pardon of her; and will grant her pardon, whatsoever she may have done to him; he will even make no pretensions further, if he may but see her, if he may but see that she is living and in happiness."

Philina shook her head, and said, "Speak low! Do not betray us! If the lady is indeed your friend, her feelings must be spared; for she does not in the least suspect that you are here. Quite a different sort of business brings her hither; and you know well

enough, one had rather see a spectre than a former lover at an inconvenient time. I will ask her, and prepare her: we will then consider what is further to be done. To-morrow I shall write you a note, saying when you are to come, or whether you may come at all. Obey me punctually; for I protest, that, without her own and my consent, no eye shall see this lovely creature. I shall keep my doors better bolted; and, with axe and crow, you surely will not visit me."

Our friend conjured her, Serlo begged of her; but all in vain: they were obliged to yield, and leave the chamber and the house.

With what feelings Wilhelm passed the night is easy to conceive. How slowly the hours of the day flowed on, while he sat expecting a message from Philina, may also be imagined. Unhappily he had to play that evening: such mental pain he had never endured. The moment his part was done, he hastened to Philina's house, without inquiring whether he had got her leave or not. He found her doors bolted: and the people of the house informed him that mademoiselle had set out early in the morning, in company with a young officer; that she had talked about returning shortly; but they had not believed her, she having paid her debts, and taken everything along with her.

This intelligence drove Wilhelm almost frantic. He hastened to Laertes, that he might take measures for pursuing her, and, cost what it would, for attaining certainty regarding her attendant. Laertes, however, represented to him the imprudence of such passion and credulity. "I dare wager, after all," said he, "that it is no one else but Friedrich. The boy is of a high family, I know; he is madly in love with Philina; it is likely he has cozened from his friends a fresh supply of money, so that he can once more live with her in peace for awhile."

These considerations, though they did not quite

convince our friend, sufficed to make him waver. Laertes showed him how improbable the story was with which Philina had amused them; reminded him how well the stranger's hair and figure answered Friedrich; that with the start of him by twelve hours, they could not easily be overtaken; and, what was more than all, that Serlo could not do without him at the theatre.

By so many reasons, Wilhelm was at last persuaded to postpone the execution of his project. That night Laertes got an active man, to whom they gave the charge of following the runaways. It was a steady person, who had often officiated as courier and guide to travelling-parties, and was at present without employment. They gave him money, they informed him of the whole affair; instructing him to seek and overtake the fugitives, to keep them in his eye, and instantly to send intelligence to Wilhelm where and how he found them. That very hour he mounted horse, pursuing this ambiguous pair; by which exertions, Wilhelm was, in some degree, at least composed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE departure of Philina did not make a deep sensation, either in the theatre or in the public. She never was earnest with anything: the women universally detested her; the men rather wished to see her selves-two than on the boards. Thus her fine, and, for the stage, even happy, talents were of no avail to her. The other members of the company took greater labour on them to supply her place: the Frau Melina, in particular, was much distinguished by her diligence and zeal. She noted down, as formerly, the principles of Wilhelm; she guided herself according to his theory and his example; there was of late a something in her nature that rendered her more interesting. She soon acquired an accurate mode of acting: she attained the natural tone of conversation altogether, that of keen emotion she attained in some degree. She contrived, moreover, to adapt herself to Serlo's humours: she took pains in singing for his pleasure, and succeeded in that matter moderately well.

By the accession of some other players, the company was rendered more complete: and while Wilhelm and Serlo were busied each in his degree, the former insisting on the general tone and spirit of the whole, the latter faithfully elaborating the separate passages, a laudable ardour likewise inspired the actors; and the public took a lively interest in their concerns.

"We are on the right path," said Serlo once: "if we can continue thus, the public, too, will soon be on it. Men are easily astonished and misled by wild and barbarous exhibitions; yet lay before them anything

rational and polished, in an interesting manner, and doubt not they will catch at it."

"What forms the chief defect of our German theatre, what prevents both actor and spectator from obtaining proper views, is the vague and variegated nature of the objects it contains. You nowhere find a barrier on which to prop your judgment. In my opinion, it is far from an advantage to us that we have expanded our stage into, as it were, a boundless arena for the whole of nature; yet neither manager nor actor need attempt contracting it, until the taste of the nation shall itself mark out the proper circle. Every good society submits to certain conditions and restrictions; so also must every good theatre. Certain manners, certain modes of speech, certain objects, and fashions of proceeding, must altogether be excluded. You do not grow poorer by limiting your household expenditure."

On these points our friends were more or less accordant or at variance. The majority, with Wilhelm at their head, were for the English theatre; Serlo and a few others for the French.

It was also settled, that in vacant hours, of which unhappily an actor has too many, they should in company peruse the finest plays in both these languages; examining what parts of them seemed best and worthiest of imitation. They accordingly commenced with some French pieces. On these occasions, it was soon observed, Aurelia went away whenever they began to read. At first they supposed she had been sick: Wilhelm once questioned her about it.

"I would not assist at such a reading," said she, "for how could I hear and judge, when my heart was torn in pieces? I hate the French language from the bottom of my soul."

"How can you be hostile to a language," cried our friend, "to which we Germans are indebted for the

greater part of our accomplishments; to which we must become indebted still more, if our natural qualities are ever to assume their proper form?"

"It is no prejudice!" replied Aurelia, "a painful impression, a hated recollection of my faithless friend, has robbed me of all enjoyment in that beautiful and cultivated tongue. How I hate it now with my whole strength and heart! During the period of our kindliest connection, he wrote in German; and what genuine, powerful, cordial German! It was not till he wanted to get quit of me that he began seriously to write in French. I marked, I felt, what he meant. What he would have blushed to utter in his mother tongue, he could by this means write with a quiet conscience. It is the language of reservations, equivocations, and lies: it is a *perfidious* language. Heaven be praised! I cannot find another word to express this *perfide* of theirs in all its compass. Our poor *treulos*, the *faithless* of the English, are innocent as babes beside it. *Perfide* means faithless with pleasure, with insolence and malice. How enviable is the culture of a nation that can figure out so many shades of meaning by a single word! French is exactly the language of the world, — worthy to become the universal language, that all may have it in their power to cheat and cozen and betray each other! His French letters were always smooth and pleasant, while you read them. If you chose to believe it, they sounded warmly, even passionately; but, if you examined narrowly, they were but phrases, — accursed phrases! He has spoiled my feeling to the whole language, to French literature, even to the beautiful, delicious expressions of noble souls which may be found in it. I shudder when a French word is spoken in my hearing."

In such terms she could for hours continue to give utterance to her chagrin, interrupting or disturbing every other kind of conversation. Sooner or later,

Serlo used to put an end to such peevish lamentations by some bitter sally; but by this means, commonly, the talk for the evening was destroyed.

In all provinces of life, it is unhappily the case, that whatever is to be accomplished by a number of co-operating men and circumstances cannot long continue perfect. Of an acting company as well as of a kingdom, of a circle of friends as well as of an army, you may commonly select the moment when it may be said that all was standing on the highest pinnacle of harmony, perfection, contentment, and activity. But alterations will ere long occur; the individuals that compose the body often change; new members are added; the persons are no longer suited to the circumstances, or the circumstances to the persons; what was formerly united quickly falls asunder. Thus it was with Serlo's company. For a time you might have called it as complete as any German company could ever boast of being. Most of the actors were occupying their proper places: all had enough to do, and all did it willingly. Their private personal condition was not bad; and each appeared to promise great things in his art, for each commenced with animation and alacrity. But it soon became apparent that a part of them were mere automatons, who could not reach beyond what was attainable without the aid of feeling. Nor was it long till grudgings and envyings arose among them, such as commonly obstruct every good arrangement, and easily distort and tear in pieces everything that reasonable and thinking men would wish to keep united.

The departure of Philina was not quite so insignificant as it had at first appeared. She had always skilfully contrived to entertain the manager, and keep the others in good humour. She had endured Aurelia's violence with amazing patience, and her dearest task had been to flatter Wilhelm. Thus she was, in some respects, a

bond of union for the whole: the loss of her was quickly felt.

Serlo could not live without some little passion of the love sort. Elmira was of late grown up, we might almost say grown beautiful; for some time she had been attracting his attention: and Philina, with her usual dexterity, had favoured this attachment so soon as she observed it. "We should train ourselves in time," she would say, "to the business of procuress: nothing else remains for us when we are old." Serlo and Elmira had by this means so approximated to each other, that, shortly after the departure of Philina, both were of a mind: and their small romance was rendered doubly interesting, as they had to hide it sedulously from the father; Old Boisterous not understanding jokes of that description. Elmira's sister had been admitted to the secret; and Serlo was, in consequence, obliged to overlook a multitude of things in both of them. One of their worst habits was an excessive love of junketing, — nay, if you will, an intolerable gluttony. In this respect they altogether differed from Philina, to whom it gave a new tint of loveliness, that she seemed, as it were, to live on air, eating very little; and, for drink, merely skimming off, with all imaginable grace, the foam from a glass of champagne.

Now, however, Serlo, if he meant to please his doxies, was obliged to join breakfast with dinner; and with this, by a substantial bever, to connect the supper. But, amid gormandising, Serlo entertained another plan, which he longed to have fulfilled. He imagined that he saw a kind of attachment between Wilhelm and Aurelia, and he anxiously wished that it might assume a serious shape. He hoped to cast the whole mechanical department of his theatrical economy on Wilhelm's shoulders; to find in him, as in the former brother, a faithful and industrious tool. Already he had, by degrees, shifted over to him most of the cares of manage-

ment; Aurelia kept the strong-box; and Serlo once more lived as he had done of old, entirely according to his humour. Yet there was a circumstance which vexed him in secret, as it did his sister likewise.

The world has a particular way of acting toward public persons of acknowledged merit: it gradually begins to be indifferent to them, and to favour talents which are new, though far inferior; it makes excessive requisitions of the former, and accepts of anything with approbation from the latter.

Serlo and Aurelia had opportunity enough to meditate on this peculiarity. The strangers, especially the young and handsome ones, had drawn the whole attention and applause upon themselves; and Serlo and his sister, in spite of the most zealous efforts, had in general to make their exits without the welcome sound of clapping hands. It is true, some special causes were at work on this occasion. Aurelia's pride was palpable, and her contempt for the public was known to many. Serlo, indeed, flattered every individual; but his cutting jibes against the whole were often circulated and repeated. The new members, again, were not only strangers, unknown, and wanting help, but some of them were likewise young and amiable: thus all of them found patrons.

Erelong, too, there arose internal discontents, and many bickerings, among the actors. Scarcely had they noticed that our friend was acting as director, when most of them began to grow the more remiss, the more he strove to introduce a better order, greater accuracy, and chiefly to insist that everything mechanical should be performed in the most strict and regular manner.

Thus, by and by, the whole concern, which actually for a time had nearly looked ideal, grew as vulgar in its attributes as any mere itinerating theatre. And, unhappily, just as Wilhelm, by his labour, diligence, and vigorous efforts, had made himself acquainted with

the requisitions of the art, and trained completely both his person and his habits to comply with them, he began to feel, in melancholy hours, that this craft deserved the necessary outlay of time and talents less than any other. The task was burdensome, the recompense was small. He would rather have engaged with any occupation in which, when the period of exertion is passed, one can enjoy repose of mind, than with this, wherein, after undergoing much mechanical drudgery, the aim of one's activity cannot still be attained but by the strongest effort of thought and emotion. Besides, he had to listen to Aurelia's complaints about her brother's wastefulness: he had to misconceive the winks and nods of Serlo, trying from afar to lead him to a marriage with Aurelia. He had, withal, to hide his own secret sorrow, which pressed heavy on his heart, because of that ambiguous officer whom he had sent in quest of. The messenger returned not, sent no tidings; and Wilhelm feared that his Mariana was lost to him a second time.

About this period, there occurred a public mourning, which obliged our friends to shut their theatre for several weeks. Wilhelm seized this opportunity to pay a visit to the clergyman with whom the harper had been placed to board. He found him in a pleasant district; and the first thing that he noticed in the parsonage was the old man teaching a boy to play upon his instrument. The harper showed great joy at sight of Wilhelm: he rose, held out his hand, and said, "You see, I am still good for something in the world; permit me to continue; for my hours are all distributed, and full of business."

The clergyman saluted Wilhelm very kindly, and told him that the harper promised well, already giving hopes of a complete recovery.

Their conversation naturally turned upon the various modes of treating the insane.

"Except physical derangements," observed the clergyman, "which often place insuperable difficulties in the way, and in regard to which I follow the prescriptions of a wise physician, the means of curing madness seem to me extremely simple. They are the very means by which you hinder sane persons from becoming mad. Awaken their activity; accustom them to order; bring them to perceive that they hold their being and their fate in common with many millions; that extraordinary talents, the highest happiness, the deepest misery, are but slight variations from the general lot: in this way, no insanity will enter, or, if it has entered, will gradually disappear. I have portioned out the old man's hours: he gives lessons to some children on the harp; he works in the garden; he is already much more cheerful. He wishes to enjoy the cabbages he plants: my son, to whom in case of death he has bequeathed his harp, he is ardent to instruct, that the boy may be able to make use of his inheritance. I have said but little to him, as a clergyman, about his wild, mysterious scruples; but a busy life brings on so many incidents that erelong he must feel how true it is, that doubt of any kind can be removed by nothing but activity. I go softly to work: yet, if I could get his beard and hood removed, I should reckon it a weighty point; for nothing more exposes us to madness than distinguishing ourselves from others, and nothing more contributes to maintain our common sense than living in the universal way with multitudes of men. Alas! how much there is in education, in our social institutions, to prepare us and our children for insanity!"

Wilhelm stayed some days with this intelligent divine; heard from him many curious narratives, not of the insane alone, but of persons such as commonly are reckoned wise and rational, though they may have peculiarities which border on insanity.

The conversation became doubly animated, on the

entrance of the doctor, with whom it was a custom to pay frequent visits to his friend the clergyman, and to assist him in his labours of humanity. The physician was an oldish man, who, though in weak health, had spent many years in the practice of the noblest virtues. He was a strong advocate for country life, being himself scarcely able to exist except in the open air. Withal, he was extremely active and companionable. For several years he had shown a special inclination to make friends with all the country clergymen within his reach. Such of these as were employed in any useful occupation he strove by every means to help; into others, who were still unsettled in their aims, he endeavoured to infuse a taste for some profitable species of exertion. Being at the same time in connection with a multitude of noblemen, magistrates, judges, he had in the space of twenty years, in secret, accomplished much toward the advancement of many branches of husbandry: he had done his best to put in motion every project that seemed capable of benefiting agriculture, animals, or men, and had thus forwarded improvement in its truest sense. "For man," he used to say, "there is but one misfortune, — when some idea lays hold of him, which exerts no influence upon active life, or, still more, which withdraws him from it. At the present time," continued he, on this occasion, "I have a case before me: it concerns a rich and noble couple, and hitherto has baffled all my skill. The affair belongs in part to your department, worthy pastor; and your friend here will forbear to mention it again.

"In the absence of a certain nobleman, some persons of the house, in a frolic not entirely commendable, disguised a young man in the master's clothes. The lady was to be imposed upon by this deception; and, although it was described to me as nothing but a joke, I am much afraid the purpose of it was to lead

this noble and most amiable lady from the path of honour. Her husband, however, unexpectedly returns; enters his chamber; thinks he sees his spirit; and from that time falls into a melancholy temper, firmly believing that his death is near.

"He has now abandoned himself to men who pamper him with religious ideas; and I see not how he is to be prevented from going among the Hernhuters with his lady, and, as he has no children, from depriving his relations of the chief part of his fortune."

"With his lady?" cried our friend in great agitation; for this story had frightened him extremely.

"And, alas!" replied the doctor, who regarded Wilhelm's exclamation only as the voice of common sympathy, "this lady is herself possessed with a deeper sorrow, which renders a removal from the world desirable to her also. The same young man was taking leave of her; she was not circumspect enough to hide a nascent inclination toward him; the youth grew bolder, clasped her in his arms, and pressed a large portrait of her husband, which was set with diamonds, forcibly against her breast. She felt a sharp pain, which gradually went off, leaving first a little redness, then no trace at all. As a man, I am convinced that she has nothing further to reproach herself with, in this affair; as a physician, I am certain that this pressure could not have the smallest ill effect. Yet she will not be persuaded that an induration is not taking place in the part; and, if you try to overcome her notion by the evidence of feeling, she maintains, that, though the evil is away this moment, it will return the next. She conceives that the disease will end in cancer, and thus her youth and loveliness be altogether lost to others and herself."

"Wretch that I am!" cried Wilhelm, striking his brow, and rushing from the company into the fields. He had never felt himself in such a miserable case.

The clergyman and the physician were of course exceedingly astonished at this singular discovery. In the evening all their skill was called for, when our friend returned, and, with a circumstantial disclosure of the whole occurrence, uttered the most violent accusations of himself. Both took interest in him: both felt a real concern about his general condition, particularly as he painted it in the gloomy colours which arose from the humour of the moment.

Next day the physician, without much entreaty, was prevailed upon to accompany him in his return; both that he might bear him company, and that he might, if possible, do something for Aurelia, whom our friend had left in rather dangerous circumstances.

In fact, they found her worse than they expected. She was afflicted with a sort of intermittent fever, which could the less be mastered, as she purposely maintained and aggravated the attacks of it. The stranger was not introduced as a physician: he behaved with great courteousness and prudence. They conversed about her situation, bodily and mental: her new friend related many anecdotes of persons who, in spite of lingering disorders, had attained a good old age; adding, that, in such cases, nothing could be more injurious than the intentional recalling of passionate and disagreeable emotions. In particular he stated, that, for persons labouring under chronical and partly incurable distempers, he had always found it a very happy circumstance when they chanced to entertain, and cherish in their minds, true feelings of religion. This he signified in the most unobtrusive manner, as it were historically; promising Aurelia at the same time the reading of a very interesting manuscript, which he said he had received from the hands of an excellent lady of his friends, who was now deceased. "To me," he said, "it is of uncommon value; and I shall trust you even with the original.

Nothing but the title is in my hand-writing: I have called it, 'Confessions of a Fair Saint.'"

Touching the medical and dietetic treatment of the racked and hapless patient, he also left his best advice with Wilhelm. He then departed; promising to write, and, if possible, to come again in person.

Meanwhile, in Wilhelm's absence, there had changes been preparing such as he was not aware of. During his directorship, our friend had managed all things with a certain liberality and freedom; looking chiefly at the main result. Whatever was required for dresses, decorations, and the like, he had usually provided in a plentiful and handsome style; and, for securing the coöperation of his people, he had flattered their self-interest, since he could not reach them by nobler motives. In this he felt his conduct justified the more; as Serlo for his own part never aimed at being a strict economist, but liked to hear the beauty of his theatre commended, and was contented if Aurelia, who conducted the domestic matters, on defraying all expenses, signified that she was free from debt, and could besides afford the necessary sums for clearing off such scores as Serlo in the interim, by lavish kindness to his mistresses or otherwise, might have incurred.

Melina, who was charged with managing the wardrobe, had all the while been silently considering these things, with the cold, spiteful temper peculiar to him. On occasion of our friend's departure, and Aurelia's increasing sickness, he contrived to signify to Serlo, that more money might be raised and less expended, and, consequently, something be laid up, or at least a merrier life be led. Serlo hearkened gladly to such allegations, and Melina risked the exhibition of his plan.

"I will not say," continued he, "that any of your actors has at present too much salary: they are meritorious people, they would find a welcome anywhere; but, for the income which they bring us in, they have

too much. My project would be, to set up an opera; and, as to what concerns the playhouse, I may be allowed to say it, you are the person for maintaining that establishment upon your single strength. Observe how at present your merits are neglected; and justice is refused you, not because your fellow actors are excellent, but merely good.

"Come out alone, as used to be the case; endeavour to attract around you middling, I will even say inferior people, for a slender salary; regale the public with mechanical displays, as you can so cleverly do; apply your remaining means to the opera, which I am talking of; and you will quickly see, that, with the same labour and expense, you will give greater satisfaction, while you draw incomparably more money than at present."

These observations were so flattering to Serlo, that they could not fail of making some impression on him. He readily admitted, that, loving music as he did, he had long wished for some arrangement such as this; though he could not but perceive that the public taste would thus be still more widely led astray, and that with such a mongrel theatre, not properly an opera, not properly a playhouse, any residue of true feeling for regular and perfect works of art must shortly disappear.

Melina ridiculed, in terms more plain than delicate, our friend's pedantic notions in this matter, and his vain attempts to form the public mind, instead of being formed by it: Serlo and he at last agreed, with full conviction, that the sole concern was, how to gather money, and grow rich, or live a joyous life; and they scarcely concealed their wish to be delivered from those persons who at present hindered them. Melina took occasion to lament Aurelia's weak health, and the speedy end which it threatened; thinking all the while directly the reverse. Serlo affected to regret

that Wilhelm could not sing, thus signifying that his presence was by no means indispensable. Melina then came forward with a whole catalogue of savings, which, he said, might be effected; and Serlo saw in him his brother-in-law replaced threefold. They both felt that secrecy was necessary in the matter, but this mutual obligation only joined them closer in their interests. They failed not to converse together privately on every thing that happened; to blame whatever Wilhelm or Aurelia undertook; and to elaborate their own project, and prepare it more and more for execution.

Silent as they both might be about their plan, little as their words betrayed them, in their conduct they were not so politic as constantly to hide their purposes. Melina now opposed our friend in many points that lay within the province of the latter; and Serlo, who had never acted smoothly to his sister, seemed to grow more bitter the more her sickness deepened, the more her passionate and variable humours would have needed toleration.

About this period they took up the "Emilie Galotti" of Lessing. The parts were very happily distributed and filled: within the narrow circle of this tragedy, the company found room for showing all the complex riches of their acting. Serlo, in the character of Marinelli, was altogether in his place; Odoardo was very well exhibited; Madam Melina played the Mother with considerable skill; Elmira gained distinction as Emilie; Laertes made a stately Appiani; and Wilhelm had bestowed the study of some months upon the Prince's part. On this occasion, both internally and with Aurelia and Serlo, he had often come upon this question: What is the distinction between a noble and a well-bred manner? and how far must the former be included in the latter, though the latter is not in the former?

Serlo, who himself in Marinelli had to act the court-

ier accurately, without caricature, afforded him some valuable thoughts on this. "A well-bred carriage," he would say, "is difficult to imitate; for in strictness it is negative, and it implies a long-continued previous training. You are not required to exhibit in your manner anything that specially betokens dignity; for, by this means, you are like to run into formality and haughtiness: you are rather to avoid whatever is undignified and vulgar. You are never to forget yourself; are to keep a constant watch upon yourself and others; to forgive nothing that is faulty in your own conduct, in that of others neither to forgive too little nor too much. Nothing must appear to touch you, nothing to agitate: you must never overhaste yourself, must ever keep yourself composed, retaining still an outward calmness, whatever storms may rage within. The noble character at certain moments may resign himself to his emotions; the well-bred never. The latter is like a man dressed out in fair and spotless clothes: he will not lean on anything; every person will beware of rubbing on him. He distinguishes himself from others, yet he may not stand apart; for as in all arts, so in this, the hardest must at length be done with ease: the well-bred man of rank, in spite of every separation, always seems united with the people round him; he is never to be stiff or uncomplying; he is always to appear the first, and never to insist on so appearing.

"It is clear, then, that, to seem well-bred, a man must actually be so. It is also clear why women generally are more expert at taking up the air of breeding than the other sex; why courtiers and soldiers catch it more easily than other men."

Wilhelm now despaired of doing justice to his part; but Serlo aided and encouraged him, communicated the acutest observations on detached points, and furnished him so well, that, on the exhibition of the piece, the public reckoned him a very proper Prince.

Serlo had engaged to give him, when the play was over, such remarks as might occur upon his acting: a disagreeable contention with Aurelia prevented any conversation of that kind. Aurelia had acted the character of Orsina, in such a style as few have ever done. She was well acquainted with the part, and during the rehearsals she had treated it indifferently: but, in the exhibition of the piece, she had opened, as it were, all the sluices of her personal sorrow; and the character was represented so as never poet in the first glow of invention could have figured it. A boundless applause rewarded her painful efforts; but her friends, on visiting her when the play was finished, found her half fainting in her chair.

Serlo had already signified his anger at her overcharged acting, as he called it; at this disclosure of her inmost heart before the public, to many individuals of which the history of her fatal passion was more or less completely known. He had spoken bitterly and fiercely; grinding with his teeth and stamping with his feet, as was his custom when enraged. "Never mind her," cried he, when he saw her in the chair, surrounded by the rest: "she will go upon the stage stark naked one of these days, and then the approbation will be perfect."

"Ungrateful, inhuman man!" exclaimed she: "soon shall I be carried naked to the place where approbation or disapprobation can no longer reach our ears!" With these words she started up, and hastened to the door. The maid had not yet brought her mantle; the sedan was not in waiting; it had been raining lately; a cold, raw wind was blowing through the streets. They endeavoured to persuade her to remain, for she was very warm. But in vain: she purposely walked slow; she praised the coolness, seemed to inhale it with peculiar eagerness. No sooner was she home, than she became so hoarse that she could hardly speak

a word: she did not mention that there was a total stiffness in her neck and along her back. Shortly afterward a sort of palsy in the tongue came on, so that she pronounced one word instead of another. They put her to bed: by numerous and copious remedies, the evil changed its form, but was not mastered. The fever gathered strength: her case was dangerous.

Next morning she enjoyed a quiet hour. She sent for Wilhelm, and delivered him a letter. "This sheet," said she, "has long been waiting for the present moment. I feel that my end is drawing nigh: promise me that you yourself will take this paper; that, by a word or two, you will avenge my sorrows on the faithless man. He is not void of feeling: my death will pain him for a moment."

Wilhelm took the letter; still endeavouring to console her, and to drive away the thought of death.

"No," said she: "do not deprive me of my nearest hope. I have waited for him long: I will joyfully clasp him when he comes."

Shortly after this the manuscript arrived which the physician had engaged to send her. She called for Wilhelm, — made him read it to her. The effect which it produced upon her, the reader will be better able to appreciate after looking at the following Book. The violent and stubborn temper of our poor Aurelia was mollified by hearing it. She took back the letter, and wrote another, as it seemed, in a meeker tone; charging Wilhelm at the same time to console her friend, if he should be distressed about her death; to assure him that she had forgiven him, and wished him every kind of happiness.

From this time she was very quiet, and appeared to occupy herself with but a few ideas, which she endeavoured to extract and appropriate from the manuscript, out of which she frequently made Wilhelm read to her. The decay of her strength was not perceptible: nor

had Wilhelm been anticipating the event, when one morning, as he went to visit her, he found that she was dead.

Entertaining such respect for her as he had done, and accustomed as he was to live in her society, the loss of her affected him with no common sorrow. She was the only person that had truly wished him well: the coldness of Serlo he had felt of late but too keenly. He hastened, therefore, to perform the service she had entrusted to him: he wished to be absent for a time.

On the other hand, this journey was exceedingly convenient for Melina: in the course of his extensive correspondence, he had lately entered upon terms with a male and a female singer, who, it was intended, should, by their performances in interludes, prepare the public for his future opera. The loss of Aurelia, and Wilhelm's absence, were to be supplied in this manner; and our friend was satisfied with anything that could facilitate his setting out.

He had formed, within himself, a singular idea of the importance of his errand. The death of his unhappy friend had moved him deeply; and, having seen her pass so early from the scene, he could not but be hostilely inclined against the man who had abridged her life, and made that shortened term so full of woe.

Notwithstanding the last mild words of the dying woman, he resolved, that, on delivering his letter, he would pass a strict sentence on her faithless friend; and, not wishing to depend upon the temper of the moment, he studied an address, which, in the course of preparation, became more pathetic than just. Having fully convinced himself of the good composition of his essay, he began committing it to memory, and at the same time making ready for departure. Mignon was present as he packed his articles: she asked him whether he intended travelling south or north; and, learning that it was the latter, she replied, "Then, I

will wait here for thee." She begged of him the pearl necklace which had once been Mariana's. He could not refuse to gratify the dear little creature, and he gave it her: the neckerchief she had already. On the other hand, she put the veil of Hamlet's Ghost into his travelling-bag; though he told her it could not be of any service to him.

Melina took upon him the directorship: his wife engaged to keep a mother's eye upon the children, whom Wilhelm parted with unwillingly. Felix was very merry at the setting out; and, when asked what pretty thing he wished to have brought back for him, he said, "Hark you! bring me a papa!" Mignon seized the traveller's hand; then, standing on her tiptoes, she pressed a warm and cordial, though not a tender, kiss, upon his lips, and cried, "Master! forget us not, and come soon back."

And so we leave our friend, entering on his journey, amid a thousand different thoughts and feelings; and here subjoin, by way of close, a little poem, which Mignon had recited once or twice with great expressiveness, and which the hurry of so many singular occurrences prevented us from inserting sooner:

"Not speech, bid silence, I implore thee;
For secrecy's my duty still:
My heart entire I'd fain lay bare before thee,
But such is not of fate the will.

"In season due the sun's course backward throws
Dark night; ensue must light; the mountain's
Hard rock, at length, its bosom doth unclose,
Now grudging earth no more the hidden fountains.

"Each seeks repose upon a friend's true breast,
Where by laments he frees his bosom lonely
Whereas an oath my lips hold closely pressed,
The which to speech a God can open only."

— *Editor's Version.*

Book VI.

CONFESSIONS OF A FAIR SAINT

TILL my eighth year I was always a healthy child, but of that period I can recollect no more than of the day when I was born. About the beginning of my eighth year, I was seized with a hemorrhage; and from that moment my soul became all feeling, all memory. The smallest circumstances of that accident are yet before my eyes as if they had occurred but yesterday.

During the nine months which I then spent patiently upon a sick-bed, it appears to me the groundwork of my whole turn of thought was laid; as the first means were then afforded my mind of developing itself in its own manner.

I suffered and I loved: this was the peculiar form of my heart. In the most violent fits of coughing, in the depressing pains of fever, I lay quiet, like a snail drawn back within its house: the moment I obtained a respite, I wanted to enjoy something pleasant; and, as every other pleasure was denied me, I endeavoured to amuse myself with the innocent delights of eye and ear. The people brought me dolls and picture-books, and whoever would sit by my bed was obliged to tell me something.

From my mother I rejoiced to hear the Bible histories, and my father entertained me with natural curiosities. He had a very pretty cabinet, from which he brought me first one drawer and then another, as occasion served; showing me the articles, and pointing out their properties. Dried plants and insects, with many kinds of anatomical preparations, such as human skin, bones, mummies, and the like, were in succession

laid upon the sick-bed of the little one; the birds and animals he killed in hunting were shown to me, before they passed into the kitchen; and, that the Prince of the World might also have a voice in this assembly, my aunt related to me love-adventures out of fairy-tales. All was accepted, all took root. There were hours in which I vividly conversed with the Invisible Power. I can still repeat some verses which I then dictated, and my mother wrote down.

Often I would tell my father back again what I had learned from him. Rarely did I take any physic without asking where the simples it was made of grew, what look they had, what names they bore. Nor had the stories of my aunt lighted on stony ground. I figured myself out in pretty clothes, and met the most delightful princes, who could find no peace or rest till they discovered who the unknown beauty was. One adventure of this kind, with a charming little angel dressed in white, with golden wings, who warmly courted me, I dwelt upon so long, that my imagination painted out his form almost to visibility.

After a year I was pretty well restored to health, but nothing of the giddiness of childhood remained with me. I could not play with dolls: I longed for beings able to return my love. Dogs, cats, and birds, of which my father kept a great variety, afforded me delight; but what would I have given for such a creature as my aunt once told me of! It was a lamb which a peasant-girl took up and nourished in a wood; but, in the guise of this pretty beast, an enchanted prince was hid, who at length appeared in his native shape, a lovely youth, and rewarded his benefactress by his hand. Such a lamb I would have given the world for.

But there was none to be had; and, as everything about me went on in such a quite natural manner, I by degrees all but abandoned nearly all hopes of such

a treasure. Meanwhile I comforted myself by reading books in which the strangest incidents were set forth. Among them all, my favourite was the "Christian German Hercules:" that devout love-history was altogether in my way. Whenever anything befell his dear Valiska, and cruel things befell her, he always prayed before hastening to her aid; and the prayers stood there *verbatim*. My longing after the Invisible, which I had always dimly felt, was strengthened by such means; for, in short, it was ordained that God should also be my confidant.

As I grew older I continued reading, Heaven knows what, in chaotic order. The "Roman Octavia" was the book I liked beyond all others. The persecutions of the first Christians, decorated with the charms of a romance, awoke the deepest interest in me.

But my mother now began to murmur at my constant reading; and, to humour her, my father took away my books to-day, but gave them back to-morrow. She was wise enough to see that nothing could be done in this way; she next insisted merely that my Bible should be read with equal diligence. To this I was not disinclined, and I accordingly perused the sacred volume with a lively interest. Withal my mother was extremely careful that no books of a corruptive tendency should come into my hands: immodest writings I would, of my own accord, have cast away; for my princes and my princesses were all extremely virtuous.

To my mother, and my zeal for knowledge, it was owing, that, with all my love of books, I also learned to cook; for much was to be seen in cookery. To cut up a hen, a pig, was quite a feast for me. I used to bring the entrails to my father, and he talked with me about them as if I had been a student of anatomy. With suppressed joy he would often call me his misfashioned son.

I had passed my twelfth year. I learned French, dancing, and drawing: I received the usual instructions in religion. In the latter, many thoughts and feelings were awakened, but nothing properly relating to my own condition. I liked to hear the people speak of God; I was proud that I could speak on these points better than my equals. I zealously read many books which put me in a condition to talk about religion: but it never once struck me to think how matters stood with *me*, whether *my* soul was formed according to these holy precepts, whether it was like a glass from which the everlasting sun could be reflected in its glancing. From the first I had presupposed all this.

My French I learned with eagerness. My teacher was a clever man. He was not a vain empiric, not a dry grammarian: he had learning, he had seen the world. Instructing me in language, he satisfied my zeal for knowledge in a thousand ways. I loved him so much, that I used to wait his coming with a palpitating heart. Drawing was not hard for me: I should have made greater progress had my teacher possessed head and science; he had only hands and practice.

Dancing was at first one of my smallest amusements: my body was too sensitive for it; I learned it only in the company of my sisters. But our dancing-master took a thought of gathering all his scholars, male and female, and giving them a ball. This event gave dancing quite another charm for me.

Amid a throng of boys and girls, the most remarkable were two sons of the marshal of the court. The youngest was of my age; the other, two years older: they were children of such beauty, that, according to the universal voice, no one had seen their like. For my part, scarcely had I noticed them when I lost sight of all the other crowd. From that moment I

began to dance with care, and to wish that I could dance with grace. How came it, on the other hand, that these two boys distinguished me from all the rest? No matter: before an hour had passed we had become the warmest friends, and our little entertainment did not end till we had fixed upon the time and place where we were next to meet. What a joy for me! And how charmed was I next morning when both of them inquired for my health, each in a gallant note, accompanied with a nosegay! I have never since felt as I then did. Compliment was met by compliment: letter answered letter. The church and the public-walks were grown a rendezvous; our young acquaintances, in all their little parties, now invited us together: while, at the same time, we were sly enough to veil the business from our parents, so that they saw no more of it than we thought good.

Thus had I at once got a pair of lovers. I had yet decided upon neither: they both pleased me, and we did extremely well together. All at once the eldest of the two fell very sick. I myself had often been sick; and thus I was enabled, by rendering him many little dainties and delicacies suited for a sick person, to afford some solace to the sufferer. His parents thankfully acknowledged my attention: in compliance with the prayer of their beloved son, they invited me, with all my sisters, to their house so soon as he had arisen from his sick-bed. The tenderness which he displayed on meeting me was not the feeling of a child: from that day I gave the preference to him. He warned me to keep our secret from his brother; but the flame could no longer be concealed, and the jealousy of the younger completed our romance. He played us a thousand tricks: eager to annihilate our joys, he but increased the passion he was seeking to destroy.

At last I had actually found the wished-for lamb, and this attachment acted on me like my sickness: it

made me calm, and drew me back from noisy pleasures. I was solitary, I was moved; and thoughts of God again occurred to me. He was again my confidant; and I well remember with what tears I often prayed for this poor boy, who still continued sickly.

The more childishness there was in this adventure, the more did it contribute to the forming of my heart. Our French teacher had now turned us from translating into daily writing him some letter of our own invention. I brought my little history to market, shrouded in the names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man soon saw through it, and, to render me communicative, praised my labour very much. I still waxed bolder; came openly out with the affair, adhering, even in the minute details, to truth. I do not now remember what the passage was at which he took occasion to remark, "How pretty, how natural, it is! But the good Phyllis had better have a care: the thing may soon grow serious."

I felt vexed that he did not look upon the matter as already serious; and I asked him, with an air of pique, what he meant by serious. I had not to repeat the question: he explained himself so clearly, that I could scarcely hide my terror. Yet as anger came along with it, as I took it ill that he should entertain such thoughts, I kept myself composed: I tried to justify my nymph, and said, with glowing cheeks, "But, sir, Phyllis is an honourable girl."

He was rogue enough to banter me about my honourable heroine. While we were speaking French, he played upon the word *honnête*, and hunted the honourableness of Phyllis over all its meanings. I felt the ridicule of this, and extremely puzzled. He, not to frighten me, broke off, but afterward often led the conversation to such topics. Plays, and little histories, such as I was reading and translating with him, gave him frequent opportunity to show how feeble a security

against the calls of inclination our boasted virtue was. I no longer contradicted him, but I was in secret scandalised; and his remarks became a burden to me.

With my worthy Damon, too, I by degrees fell out of all connection. The chicanery of the younger boy destroyed our intercourse. Soon after, both these blooming creatures died. I lamented sore: however, in a short time, I forgot.

But Phyllis rapidly increased in stature, was altogether healthy, and began to see the world. The hereditary prince now married, and a short time after, on his father's death, began his rule. Court and town were in the liveliest motion: my curiosity had copious nourishment. There were plays and balls, with all their usual accompaniments; and, though my parents kept retired as much as possible, they were obliged to show themselves at court, where I was of course introduced. Strangers were pouring in from every side; high company was in every house; even to us some cavaliers were recommended, others introduced; and, at my uncle's, men of every nation might be met with.

My honest mentor still continued, in a modest and yet striking way, to warn me, and I in secret to take it ill of him. With regard to his assertion, that women under every circumstance were weak, I did not feel at all convinced; and here, perhaps, I was in the right, and my mentor in the wrong: but he spoke so earnestly that once I grew afraid he might be right, and said to him, with much vivacity, "Since the danger is so great, and the human heart so weak, I will pray to God that he may keep me."

This simple answer seemed to please him, for he praised my purpose; but, on my side, it was anything but seriously meant. It was, in truth, but an empty word; for my feelings toward the Invisible were almost totally extinguished. The hurry and the crowd I lived

in dissipated my attention, and carried me along as in a rapid stream. These were the emptiest years of my life. All day long to speak of nothing, to have no solid thought, never to do anything but revel, — such was my employment. On my beloved books I never once bestowed a thought. The people I lived among had not the slightest tinge of literature or science: they were German courtiers, a class of men at that time altogether destitute of culture.

Such society, it may be thought, must naturally have led me to the brink of ruin. I lived away in mere corporeal cheerfulness: I never took myself to task, I never prayed, I never thought about myself or God. Yet I look upon it as a providential guidance, that none of these many handsome, rich, and well-dressed men could take my fancy. They were rakes, and did not conceal it; this scared me back: they adorned their speech with double meanings; this offended me, made me act with coldness toward them. Many times their improprieties exceeded belief, and I did not restrain myself from being rude.

Besides, my ancient counsellor had once in confidence contrived to tell me, that, with the greater part of these lewd fellows, health, as well as virtue, was in danger. I now shuddered at the sight of them: I was afraid if one of them in any way approached too near me. I would not touch their cups or glasses, — even the chairs they had been sitting on. Thus, morally and physically, I remained apart from them: all the compliments they paid me I haughtily accepted, as incense that was due.

Among the strangers then resident among us was one young man peculiarly distinguished, whom we used in sport to call Narciss. He had gained a reputation in the diplomatic line; and, among the various changes now occurring at court, he was in hopes of meeting with some advantageous place. He soon be-

came acquainted with my father: his acquirements and manners opened for him the way to a select society of most accomplished men. My father often spoke in praise of him: his figure, which was very handsome, would have made a still better impression, had it not been for something of self-complacency which breathed from the whole carriage of the man. I had seen him, I thought well of him; but we had never spoken.

At a great ball, where we chanced to be in company, I danced a minuet with him; but this, too, passed without results. The more violent dances, in compliance with my father, who felt anxious about my health, I was accustomed to avoid: in the present case, when these came on, I retired to an adjoining room, and began to talk with certain of my friends, elderly ladies, who had set themselves to cards.

Narciss, who had jigged it for awhile, at last came into the room where I was; and having got the better of a bleeding at the nose, which had overtaken him in dancing, he began speaking with me about a multitude of things. In half an hour the talk had grown so interesting, that neither of us could think of dancing any more. We were rallied by our friends, but we did not let their bantering disturb us. Next evening we recommenced our conversation, and were very careful not to hurt our health.

The acquaintance then was made. Narciss was often with my sisters and myself: and I now once more began to reckon over and consider what I knew, what I thought of, what I had felt, and what I could express myself about in conversation. My new friend had mingled in the best society; besides the department of history and politics, with every part of which he was familiar, he had gained extensive literary knowledge; there was nothing new that issued from the press, especially in France, that he was unacquainted with. He brought or sent me many a pleasant book, but this we had to

keep as secret as forbidden love. Learned women had been made ridiculous, nor were well-informed women tolerated, — apparently because it would have been uncivil to put so many ill-informed men to shame. Even my father, much as he delighted in this new opportunity of cultivating my mind, expressly stipulated that our literary commerce should remain secret.

Thus our intercourse continued for almost year and day; and still I could not say, that, in any wise, Narciss had ever shown me aught of love or tenderness. He was always complaisant and kind, but manifested nothing like attachment: on the contrary, he even seemed to be in some degree affected by the charms of my youngest sister, who was then extremely beautiful. In sport, he gave her many little friendly names out of foreign tongues; for he could speak two or three of these extremely well, and loved to mix their idiomatic phrases with his German. Such compliments she did not answer very liberally; she was entangled in a different noose: and being very sharp, while he was very sensitive, the two were often quarrelling about trifles. With my mother and my aunt he kept on very pleasant terms; and thus, by gradual advances, he was grown to be a member of the family.

Who knows how long we might have lived in this way, had not a curious accident altered our relations all at once? My sisters and I were invited to a certain house, to which we did not like to go. The company was too mixed; and persons of the stupidest, if not the rudest, stamp were often to be met there. Narciss, on this occasion, was invited also; and on his account I felt inclined to go, for I was sure of finding one, at least, whom I could converse with as I desired. Even at table we had many things to suffer, for several of the gentlemen had drunk too much: then, in the drawing-room, they insisted on a game at forfeits. It went on with great vivacity and tumult. Narciss had

lost a forfeit: they ordered him, by way of penalty, to whisper something pleasant in the ear of every member of the company. It seems he stayed too long beside my next neighbour, the lady of a captain. The latter on a sudden struck him such a box with his fist, that the powder flew about me, into my eyes. When I had got my eyes cleared, and in some degree recovered from my terror, I saw that both gentlemen had drawn their swords. Narciss was bleeding; and the other, mad with wine and rage and jealousy, could scarcely be held back by all the company. I seized Narciss, led him by the arm up-stairs; and, as I did not think my friend safe even here from his frantic enemy, I shut the door and bolted it.

Neither of us considered the wound serious, for a slight cut across the hand was all we saw. Soon, however, I discovered that there was a stream of blood running down his back, that there was a deep wound on the head. I now began to be afraid. I hastened to the lobby, to get help: but I could see no person; every one had stayed below to calm the raving captain. At last a daughter of the family came skipping up: her mirth annoyed me; she was like to die with laughing at the bedlam spectacle. I conjured her, for the sake of Heaven, to get a surgeon; and she, in her wild way, sprang down-stairs to fetch me one herself.

Returning to my wounded friend, I bound my handkerchief about his hand, and a neckerchief, that was hanging on the door, about his head. He was still bleeding copiously: he now grew pale, and seemed as if he were about to faint. There was none at hand to aid me: I very freely put my arm round him, patted his cheek, and tried to cheer him by little flatteries. It seemed to act on him like a spiritual remedy: he kept his senses, but sat as pale as death.

At last the active housewife arrived: it is easy to conceive her terror when she saw my friend in this

predicament, lying in my arms, and both of us bestreamed with blood. No one had supposed he was wounded: all imagined I had carried him away in safety.

Now smelling-bottles, wine, and everything that could support and stimulate, were copiously produced. The surgeon also came, and I might easily have been dispensed with. Narciss, however, held me firmly by the hand: I would have stayed without holding. During the dressing of his wounds, I continued wetting his lips with wine; I minded not, though all the company were now about us. The surgeon having finished, his patient took a mute but tender leave of me, and was conducted home.

The mistress of the house now led me to her bedroom: she had to strip me altogether; and I must confess, while they washed the blood from me, I saw with pleasure, for the first time, in a mirror, that I might be reckoned beautiful without help of dress. No portion of my clothes could be put on again; and, as the people of the house were all either less or larger than myself, I was taken home in a strange disguise. My parents were, of course, astonished. They felt exceedingly indignant at my fright, at the wounds of their friend, at the captain's madness, at the whole occurrence. A very little would have made my father send the captain a challenge, that he might avenge his friend without delay. He blamed the gentlemen that had been there, because they had not punished on the spot such a murderous attempt; for it was but too clear, that the captain, instantly on striking, had drawn his sword, and wounded the other from behind. The cut across the hand had been given just when Narciss himself was grasping at his sword. I felt unspeakably affected, altered; or how shall I express it? The passion which was sleeping at the deepest bottom of my heart had at once broken loose, like a flame getting air.

And if joy and pleasure are well suited for the first producing and the silent nourishing of love, yet this passion, bold by nature, is most easily impelled by terror to decide and to declare itself. My mother gave her little flurried daughter some medicine, and made her go to bed. With the earliest morrow my father hastened to Narciss, whom he found lying very sick of a wound-fever.

He told me little of what passed between them, but tried to quiet me about the probable results of this event. They were now considering whether an apology should be accepted, whether the affair should go before a court of justice, and many other points of that description. I knew my father too well to doubt that he would be averse to see the matter end without a duel: but I held my peace; for I had learned from him before, that women should not meddle in such things. For the rest, it did not strike me as if anything had passed between the friends, in which my interests were specially concerned; but my father soon communicated to my mother the purport of their further conversation. Narciss, he said, appeared to be exceedingly affected at the help afforded by me; had embraced him, declared himself my debtor for ever, signified that he desired no happiness except what he could share with me, and concluded by entreating that he might presume to ask my hand. All this mamma repeated to me, but subjoined the safe reflection, that, "as for what was said in the first agitation of mind in such a case, there was little trust to be placed in it." "Of course, none," I answered with affected coldness; though all the while I was feeling, Heaven knows what.

Narciss continued sick for two months; owing to the wound in his right hand, he could not even write. Yet, in the meantime, he showed me his regard by the most obliging courtesies. All these unusual attentions I combined with what my mother had disclosed to

me, and constantly my head was full of fancies. The whole city talked of the occurrence. With me they spoke of it in a peculiar tone: they drew inferences, which, greatly as I struggled to avoid them, touched me very close. What had formerly been habitude and trifling, was now grown seriousness and inclination. The anxiety in which I lived was the more violent, the more carefully I studied to conceal it from every one. The idea of losing him frightened me: the possibility of any closer union made me tremble. For a half-prudent girl, there is really something awful in the thought of marriage.

By such incessant agitations I was once more led to recollect myself. The gaudy imagery of a thoughtless life, which used to hover day and night before my eyes, was at once blown away. My soul again began to awaken, but the greatly interrupted intimacy with my invisible friend was not so easy to renew. We still continued at a frigid distance: it was again something, but little to the times of old.

A duel had been fought, and the captain severely wounded, before I ever heard of it. The public feeling was, in all senses, strong on the side of my lover, who at length again appeared upon the scene. But, first of all, he came, with his head tied up and his arm in a sling, to visit us. How my heart beat while he was there! The whole family was present: general thanks and compliments were all that passed on either side. Narciss, however, found an opportunity to show some secret tokens of his love to me; by which means my inquietude was but increased. After his recovery he visited us throughout the winter on the former footing; and in spite of all the soft, private marks of tenderness which he contrived to give me, the whole affair remained unsettled, undiscussed.

In this manner was I kept in constant practice. I could trust my thoughts to no mortal, and from God

I was too far removed. Him I had quite forgotten those four wild years: I now again began to think of him occasionally, but our acquaintance had grown cool; they were visits of mere ceremony these; and as, moreover, in waiting on him, I used to dress in fine apparel, to set before him self-complacently my virtue, honour, and superiorities to others, he did not seem to notice me, or know me in that finery.

A courtier would have been exceedingly distressed, if the prince who held his fortune in his hands had treated him in this way; but, for me, I did not sorrow at it. I had what I required, — health and conveniences: if God should please to think of me, well; if not, I reckoned I had done my duty.

This, in truth, I did not think at that period; yet it was the true figure of my soul. But, to change and purify my feelings, preparations were already made.

The spring came on: Narciss once visited me unannounced, and at a time when I happened to be quite alone. He appeared in the character of lover, and asked me if I could bestow on him my heart, and, so soon as he should obtain some lucrative and honourable place, my hand along with it.

He had been received into our service; but at first they kept him back, and would not rapidly promote him, because they dreaded his ambition. Having some little fortune of his own, he was left with a slender salary.

Notwithstanding my regard for him, I knew that he was not a man to treat with altogether frankly. I drew up, therefore, and referred him to my father. About my father he did not seem to doubt, but wished first to be at one with me, now and here. I at last said, Yes; but stipulated, as an indispensable condition, that my parents should concur. He then spoke formally with both of them; they signified their satisfaction: mutual promises were given, on the faith of

his advancement, which it was expected would be speedy. Sisters and aunts were informed of this arrangement, and the strictest secrecy enjoined on them.

Thus had my lover become my bridegroom, and great was the difference between the two. If one could change the lovers of all honourable maidens into bridegrooms, it would be a kindness to our sex, even though marriage should not follow the connection. The love between two persons does not lessen by the change, but it becomes more reasonable. Innumerable little follies, all coquetries and caprices, disappear. If the bridegroom tells us that we please him better in a morning-cap than in the finest head-dress, no discreet young woman will disturb herself about her hair-dressing; and nothing is more natural than that he, too, should think solidly and rather wish to form a housewife for himself than a gaudy doll for others. And thus it is in every province of the business.

Should a young woman of this kind be fortunate enough to have a bridegroom who possesses understanding and acquirements, she learns from him more than universities and foreign lands can teach. She not only willingly receives instruction when he offers it, but she endeavours to elicit more and more from him. Love makes much that was impossible, possible. By degrees, too, that subjection, so necessary and so graceful for the female sex, begins: the bridegroom does not govern like the husband; he only asks: but his mistress seeks to discover what he wants, and to offer it before he asks it.

So did experience teach me what I would not for much have missed. I was happy, truly happy as woman could be in the world, — that is to say, for a while.

Amid these quiet joys, a summer passed away. Narciss gave not the slightest reason to complain of

him: he daily became more dear to me; my whole soul was his. This he well knew, and knew also how to prize it. Meanwhile, from seeming trifles, something rose, which by and by grew hurtful to our union.

Narciss behaved to me as to a bride, and never dared to ask of me such favours as were yet forbidden us. But, about the boundaries of virtue and decorum, we were of very different opinions. I meant to walk securely, and so never granted him the smallest freedom which the whole world might not have witnessed. He, used to dainties, thought this diet very strict. On this point there was continual variance: he praised my modesty, and sought to undermine my resolution.

The *serious* of my old French teacher now occurred to me, as well as the defence which I had once suggested in regard to it.

With God I had again become a little more acquainted. He had given me a bridegroom whom I loved, and for this I felt some thankfulness. Earthly love itself concentrated my soul, and put its powers in motion; nor did it contradict my intercourse with God. I naturally complained to him of what alarmed me, but I did not perceive that I myself was wishing and desiring it. In my own eyes I was strong: I did not pray, "Lead us not into temptation!" My thoughts were far beyond temptation. In this flimsy tinselwork of virtue I came to God. He did not drive me back. On the smallest movement toward him, he left a soft impression in my soul; and this impression caused me always to return.

Except Narciss, the world was altogether dead to me: excepting him, there was nothing in it that had any charm. Even my love for dress was but the wish to please him: if I knew that he was not to see me, I could spend no care upon it. I liked to dance; but, if he was not beside me, it seemed as if I could not bear the motion. At a brilliant festival, if he was not in-

vited, I could neither take the trouble of providing new things, nor of putting on the old according to the mode. To me they were alike agreeable, or rather, I might say, alike burdensome. I used to reckon such an evening very fairly spent when I could join myself to any ancient card-party, though formerly I had not the smallest taste for such things; and, if some old acquaintance came and rallied me about it, I would smile, perhaps for the first time all that night. So, likewise, it was with promenades, and every social entertainment that can be imagined:

> "Him had I chosen from all others;
> His would I be, and not another's:
> To me his love was all in all."

Thus was I often solitary in the midst of company, and real solitude was generally acceptable to me. But my busy soul could neither sleep nor dream: I felt and thought, and acquired by degrees some faculty to speak about my feelings and my thoughts with God. Then were feelings of another sort unfolded, but these did not contradict the former feelings: my affection to Narciss accorded with the universal scheme of nature; it nowhere hindered the performance of a duty. They did not contradict each other, yet they were immensely different. Narciss was the only living form which hovered in my mind, and to which my love was all directed; but the other feeling was not directed toward any form, and yet it was unspeakably agreeable. I no longer have it: I no longer can impart it.

My lover, whom I used to trust with all my secrets, did not know of this. I soon discovered that he thought far otherwise: he often gave me writings which opposed, with light and heavy weapons, all that can be called connection with the Invisible. I used to read the books because they came from him; but, at

the end, I knew no word of all that had been argued in them.

Nor, in regard to sciences and knowledge, was there want of contradiction in our conduct. He did as all men do, — he mocked at learned women; and yet he kept continually instructing me. He used to speak with me on all subjects, law excepted; and, while constantly procuring books of every kind for me, he frequently repeated the uncertain precept, "That a lady ought to keep the knowledge she might have more secret than the Calvinist his creed in Catholic countries." And while I, by natural consequence, endeavoured not to show myself more wise or learned than formerly before the world, Narciss himself was commonly the first who yielded to the vanity of speaking about me and my superiorities.

A nobleman of high repute, and at that time valued for his influence, his talents, and accomplishments, was living at our court with great applause. He bestowed especial notice on Narciss, whom he kept continually about him. They once had an argument about the virtue of women. Narciss repeated to me what had passed between them: I was not wanting with my observations, and my friend required of me a written essay on the subject. I could write French fluently enough: I had laid a good foundation with my teacher. My correspondence with Narciss was likewise carried on in French: except in French books, there was then no elegant instruction to be had. My essay pleased the count: I was obliged to let him have some little songs, which I had lately been composing. In short, Narciss appeared to revel without stint in the renown of his beloved: and the story, to his great contentment, ended with a French epistle in heroic verse, which the count transmitted to him on departing; in which their argument was mentioned, and my friend reminded of his happiness in being destined, after all his doubts and

errors, to learn most certainly what virtue was, in the arms of a virtuous and charming wife.

He showed this poem first of all to me, and then to almost every one; each thinking of the matter what he pleased. Thus did he act in several cases: every stranger, whom he valued, must be made acquainted in our house.

A noble family was staying for a season in the place, to profit by the skill of our physician. In this house, too, Narciss was looked on as a son; he introduced me there; we found among these worthy persons the most pleasant entertainment for mind and heart. Even the common pastimes of society appeared less empty here than elsewhere. All knew how matters stood with us: they treated us as circumstances would allow, and left the main relation unalluded to. I mention this one family; because, in the after-period of my life, it had a powerful influence upon me.

Almost a year of our connection had elapsed; and, along with it, our spring was over. The summer came, and all grew drier and more earnest.

By several unexpected deaths, some offices fell vacant, which Narciss might make pretensions to. The instant was at hand when my whole destiny must be decided; and while Narciss, and all our friends, were making every effort to efface some impressions which obstructed him at court, and to obtain for him the wished-for situation, I turned with my request to my Invisible Friend. I was received so kindly, that I gladly came again. I confessed, without disguise, my wish that Narciss might obtain the place; but my prayer was not importunate, and I did not require that it should happen for the sake of my petition.

The place was obtained by a far inferior competitor. I was dreadfully troubled at this news: I hastened to my room, the door of which I locked behind me. The first fit of grief went off in a shower of tears: the next thought

was, "Yet it was not by chance that it happened;" and instantly I formed the resolution to be well content with it, seeing even this apparent evil would be for my true advantage. The softest emotions then pressed in upon me, and divided all the clouds of sorrow. I felt, that, with help like this, there was nothing one might not endure. At dinner I appeared quite cheerful, to the great astonishment of all the house.

Narciss had less internal force than I, and I was called upon to comfort him. In his family, too, he had many crosses to encounter, some of which afflicted him considerably; and, such true confidence subsisting between us, he entrusted me with all. His negotiations for entering on foreign service were not more fortunate; all this I felt deeply on his account and mine; all this, too, I ultimately carried to the place where my petitions had already been so well received.

The softer these experiences were, the oftener did I endeavour to renew them: I hoped continually to meet with comfort where I had so often met with it. Yet I did not always meet with it: I was as one that goes to warm him in the sunshine, while there is something standing in the way that makes a shadow. "What is this?" I asked myself. I traced the matter zealously, and soon perceived that it all depended on the situation of my soul: if this was not turned in the straightest direction toward God, I still continued cold; I did not feel his counter-influence; I could obtain no answer. The second question was, "What hinders this direction?" Here I was in a wide field: I perplexed myself in an inquiry which lasted nearly all the second year of my attachment to Narciss. I might have ended the investigation sooner, for it was not long till I had got upon the proper trace; but I would not confess it, and I sought a thousand outlets.

I very soon discovered that the straight direction of my soul was marred by foolish dissipations, and em-

ployment with unworthy things. The how and the where were clear enough to me. Yet by what means could I help myself, or extricate my mind from the calls of a world where everything was either cold indifference or hot insanity? Gladly would I have left things standing as they were, and lived from day to day, floating down with the stream, like other people whom I saw quite happy; but I durst not: my inmost feelings contradicted me too often. Yet if I determined to renounce society, and alter my relations to others, it was not in my power. I was hemmed in as by a ring drawn around me; certain connections I could not dissolve; and, in the matter which lay nearest to my heart, fatalities accumulated and oppressed me more and more. I often went to bed with tears, and, after a sleepless night, arose again with tears: I required some strong support; and God would not vouchsafe it me while I was running with the cap and bells.

I proceeded now to estimate my doings, all and each: dancing and play were first put upon their trial. Never was there anything spoken, thought, or written, for or against these practices, which I did not examine, talk of, read, weigh, reject, aggravate, and plague myself about. If I gave up these habits, I was certain that Narciss would be offended; for he dreaded exceedingly the ridicule which any look of strait-laced conscientiousness gives one in the eyes of the world. And doing what I now looked upon as folly, noxious folly, out of no taste of my own, but merely to gratify him, it all grew wofully irksome to me.

Without disagreeable prolixities and repetitions, it is not in my power to represent what pains I took, in trying so to counteract those occupations which distracted my attention and disturbed my peace of mind, that my heart, in spite of them, might still be open to the influences of the Invisible Being. But at last, with pain, I was compelled to admit, that in this way the quarrel

could not be composed. For no sooner had I clothed myself in the garment of folly, than it came to be something more than a mask, than the foolishness pierced and penetrated me through and through.

May I here overstep the province of a mere historical detail, and offer one or two remarks on what was then taking place within me? What could it be which so changed my tastes and feelings, that, in my twenty-second year, nay, earlier, I lost all relish for the recreations with which people of that age are harmlessly delighted? Why were they not harmless for me? I may answer, "Just because they were not harmless; because I was not, like others of my years, unacquainted with my soul. No! I knew, from experiences which had reached me unsought, that there are loftier emotions, which afford us a contentment such as it is vain to seek in the amusements of the world; and that, in these higher joys, there is also kept a secret treasure for strengthening the spirit in misfortune.

But the pleasures of society, the dissipations of youth, must needs have had a powerful charm for me; since it was not in my power to engage in them without participation, to act among them as if they were not there. How many things could I now do, if I liked, with entire coldness, which then dazzled and confounded me, nay, threatened to obtain the mastery over me! Here there could no medium be observed: either those delicious amusements, or my nourishing and quickening internal emotions, must be given up.

But, in my soul, the strife had, without my own consciousness, already been decided. Even if there still was anything within me that longed for earthly pleasures, I had now become unfitted for enjoying them. Much as a man might hanker after wine, all desire of drinking would forsake him, if he should be placed among full barrels in a cellar, where the foul air was like to suffocate him. Free air is more than

wine; this I felt but too keenly: and, from the first, it would have cost me little studying to prefer the good to the delightful, if the fear of losing the affection of Narciss had not restrained me. But at last, when after many thousand struggles, and thoughts continually renewed, I began to cast a steady eye upon the bond which held me to him, I discovered that it was but weak, that it might be torn asunder. I at once perceived it to be only as a glass bell, which shut me up in the exhausted, airless space: one bold stroke to break the bell in pieces, and thou art delivered!

No sooner thought than tried. I drew off the mask, and on all occasions acted as my heart directed. Narciss I still cordially loved: but the thermometer, which formerly had stood in hot water, was now hanging in the natural air; it could rise no higher than the warmth of the atmosphere directed.

Unhappily it cooled very much. Narciss drew back, and began to assume a distant air: this was at his option, but my thermometer descended as he drew back. Our family observed this, questioned me, and seemed to be surprised. I explained to them, with stout defiance, that heretofore I had made abundant sacrifices; that I was ready, still further and to the end of my life, to share all crosses that befell him; but that I required full freedom in my conduct, that my doings and avoidings must depend upon my own conviction; that, indeed, I would never bigotedly cleave to my own opinion, but, on the other hand, would willingly be reasoned with; yet, as it concerned my own happiness, the decision must proceed from myself, and be liable to no manner of constraint. The greatest physician could not move me, by his reasonings, to take an article of food, which perhaps was altogether wholesome and agreeable to many, so soon as my experience had shown, that on all occasions it was noxious to me; as I might produce coffee for an instance: and just as little, nay,

still less, would I have any sort of conduct which misled me, preached up and demonstrated upon me as morally profitable.

Having so long prepared myself in silence, these debates were rather pleasant than vexatious to me. I gave vent to my soul: I felt the whole worth of my determination. I yielded not a hair's-breadth, and those to whom I owed no filial respect were sharply handled and despatched. In the family I soon prevailed. My mother from her youth had entertained these sentiments, though in her they had never reached maturity; for no necessity had pressed upon her, and exalted her courage to achieve her purpose. She rejoiced in beholding her silent wishes fulfilled through me. My younger sisters seemed to join themselves with me: the second was attentive and quiet. Our aunt had the most to object. The arguments which she employed appeared to her irrefragable; and they were irrefragable, being altogether commonplace. At last I was obliged to show her, that she had no voice in the affair in any sense; and, after this, she seldom signified that she persisted in her views. She was, indeed, the only person that observed this transaction close at hand, without in some degree experiencing its influence. I do not calumniate her, when I say that she had no character, and the most limited ideas.

My father had acted altogether in his own way. He spoke not much, but often, with me on the matter: his arguments were rational; and, being *his* arguments, they could not be impugned. It was only the deep feeling of my right that gave me strength to dispute against him. But the scenes soon changed: I was forced to make appeal to his heart. Straitened by his understanding, I came out with the most pathetic pleadings. I gave free course to my tongue and to my tears. I showed him how much I loved Narciss; how much constraint I had for two years been enduring;

how certain I was of being in the right; that I was ready to testify that certainty, by the loss of my beloved bridegroom and prospective happiness, — nay, if it were necessary, by the loss of all that I possessed on earth; that I would rather leave my native country, my parents, and my friends, and beg my bread in foreign lands, than act against these dictates of my conscience. He concealed his emotion: he said nothing on the subject for awhile, and at last he openly declared in my favour.

During all this time Narciss forbore to visit us; and my father now gave up the weekly club, where he was used to meet him. The business made a noise at court, and in the town. People talked about it, as is common in such cases, which the public takes a vehement interest in, because its sentence has usurped an influence on the resolutions of weak minds. I knew enough about the world to understand that one's conduct is often censured by the very persons who would have advised it, had one consulted them; and independently of this, with my internal composure, I should have looked on all such transitory speculations just as if they had not been.

On the other hand, I hindered not myself from yielding to my inclination for Narciss. To me he had become invisible, and to him my feelings had not altered. I loved him tenderly; as it were anew, and much more steadfastly than before. If he chose to leave my conscience undisturbed, then I was his: wanting this condition, I would have refused a kingdom with him. For several months I bore these feelings and these thoughts about with me; and, finding at last that I was calm and strong enough to go peacefully and firmly to work, I wrote him a polite but not a tender note, inquiring why he never came to see me.

As I knew his manner of avoiding to explain himself in little matters, but of silently doing what seemed

good to him, I purposely urged him in the present instance. I got a long, and, as it seemed to me, pitiful, reply, in vague style and unmeaning phrases, stating, that, without a better place, he could not fix himself, and offer me his hand; that I best knew how hard it had fared with him hitherto; that as he was afraid lest a fruitless intercourse, so long continued, might prove hurtful to my reputation, I would give him leave to continue at his present distance; so soon as it was in his power to make me happy, he would look upon the word which he had given me as sacred.

I answered him on the spot, that, as our intercourse was known to all the world, it might, perhaps, be rather late to spare my reputation; for which, at any rate, my conscience and my innocence were the surest pledges; however, that I hereby freely gave him back his word, and hoped the change would prove a happy one for him. The same hour I received a short reply, which was, in all essential particulars, entirely synonymous with the first. He adhered to his former statement, that, so soon as he obtained a situation, he would ask me, if I pleased, to share his fortune with him.

This I interpreted as meaning simply nothing. I signified to my relations and acquaintances, that the affair was altogether settled; and it was so in fact. Having, nine months afterward, obtained the much-desired preferment, he offered me his hand, but under the condition, that, as the wife of a man who must keep house like other people, I should alter my opinions. I returned him many thanks, and hastened with my heart and mind away from this transaction, as one hastens from the playhouse when the curtain falls. And as he, a short time afterward, had found a rich and advantageous match, a thing now easy for him; and as I now knew him to be happy in the way he liked, — my own tranquillity was quite complete.

I must not pass in silence the fact, that several times

before he got a place, and after it, there were respectable proposals made to me; which, however, I declined without the smallest hesitation, much as my father and my mother could have wished for more compliance on my part.

At length, after a stormy March and April, the loveliest May weather seemed to be allotted me. With good health, I enjoyed an indescribable composure of mind: look around me as I pleased, my loss appeared a gain to me. Young and full of sensibility, I thought the universe a thousand times more beautiful than formerly, when I required to have society and play, that in the fair garden tedium might not overtake me. And now, as I did not conceal my piety, I likewise took heart to own my love for the sciences and arts. I drew, painted, read, and found enough of people to support me: instead of the great world, which I had left, or, rather, which had left me, a smaller one formed itself about me, which was infinitely richer and more entertaining. I had a turn for social life; and I do not deny, that, on giving up my old acquaintances, I trembled at the thought of solitude. I now found myself abundantly, perhaps excessively, indemnified. My acquaintances erelong were very numerous, not at home only, but likewise among people at a distance. My story had been noised abroad, and many persons felt a curiosity to see the woman who had valued God above her bridegroom. There was a certain pious tone to be observed, at that time, generally over Germany. In the families of several counts and princes, a care for the welfare of the soul had been awakened. Nor were there wanting noblemen who showed a like attention; while, in the inferior classes, sentiments of this kind were diffused on every side.

The noble family, whom I mentioned above, now drew me nearer to them. They had, in the meanwhile, gathered strength; several of their relations

having settled in the town. These estimable persons courted my familiarity, as I did theirs. They had high connections: I became acquainted, in their house, with a great part of the princes, counts, and lords of the empire. My sentiments were not concealed from any one: they might be honoured or be tolerated; I obtained my object, — none attacked me.

There was yet another way by which I was again led back into the world. About this period a step-brother of my father, who till now had never visited the house except in passing, stayed with us for a considerable time. He had left the service of his court, where he enjoyed great influence and honour, simply because all matters were not managed quite according to his mind. His intellect was just, his character was rigid. In these points he was very like my father; only the latter had withal a certain touch of softness, which enabled him with greater ease to yield a little in affairs, and though not to do, yet to permit, some things against his own conviction; and then to evaporate his anger at them, either in silence by himself, or in confidence amid his family. My uncle was a great deal younger, and his independence of spirit had been favoured by his outward circumstances. His mother had been very rich, and he still had large possessions to expect from her near and distant relatives; so he needed no foreign increase: whereas my father, with his moderate fortune, was bound to his place by the consideration of his salary.

My uncle had become still more unbending from domestic sufferings. He had early lost an amiable wife and a hopeful son; and, from that time, he appeared to wish to push away from him everything that did not hang upon his individual will.

In our family it was whispered now and then with some complacency, that probably he would not wed again, and so we children might anticipate inheriting

his fortune. I paid small regard to this, but the demeanour of the rest was not a little modified by their hopes. In his own imperturbable firmness of character, my uncle had grown into the habit of never contradicting any one in conversation. On the other hand, he listened with a friendly air to every one's opinion, and would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and reasons of his own. All who did not know him fancied that he thought as they did; for he was possessed of a preponderating intellect, and could transport himself into the mental state of any man, and imitate his manner of conceiving. With me he did not prosper quite so well; for here the question was about emotions, of which he had not any glimpse: and, with whatever tolerance and sympathy and rationality he spoke about my sentiments, it was palpable to me, that he had not the slightest notion of what formed the ground of all my conduct.

With all his secrecy, we by and by found out the aim of his unusual stay with us. He had, as we at length discovered, cast his eyes upon our youngest sister, with the view of giving her in marriage, and rendering her happy as he pleased; and certainly, considering her personal and mental attractions, particularly when a handsome fortune was laid into the scale along with them, she might pretend to the first matches. His feelings toward me he likewise showed us pantomimically, by procuring me a post of canoness, the income of which I very soon began to draw.

My sister was not so contented with his care as I. She now disclosed to me a tender secret, which hitherto she had very wisely kept back; fearing, as in truth it happened, that I would by all means counsel her against connection with a man who was not suited to her. I did my utmost, and succeeded. The purpose of my uncle was too serious and too distinct: the prospect for my sister, with her worldly views, was too

delightful to be thwarted by a passion which her own understanding disapproved; she mustered force to give it up.

On her ceasing to resist the gentle guidance of my uncle, the foundation of his plan was quickly laid. She was appointed maid of honour at a neighbouring court, where he could commit her to the oversight and the instructions of a lady, his friend, who presided there as governess with great applause. I accompanied her to the place of her new abode. Both of us had reason to be satisfied with the reception we met with; and frequently I could not help, in secret, smiling at the character, which now as canoness, as young and pious canoness, I was enacting in the world.

In earlier times a situation such as this would have confused me dreadfully, perhaps have turned my head; but now, in the midst of all the splendours that surrounded me, I felt extremely cool. With great quietness I let them frizzle me, and deck me out for hours, and thought no more of it than that my place required me to wear that gala livery. In the thronged saloons I spoke with all and each, though no shape or character among them made any impression on me. On returning to my house, nearly all the feeling I brought back with me was that of tired limbs. Yet my understanding drew advantage from the multitude of persons whom I saw: and I became acquainted with some ladies, patterns of every virtue, of a noble and good demeanour; particularly with the governess, under whom my sister was to have the happiness of being formed.

At my return, however, the consequences of this journey, in regard to health, were found to be less favourable. With the greatest temperance, the strictest diet, I had not been, as I used to be, completely mistress of my time and strength. Food, motion, rising, and going to sleep, dressing and visiting, had not

depended, as at home, on my own conveniency and will. In the circle of social life you cannot stop without a breach of courtesy: all that was needful I had willingly performed; because I looked upon it as my duty, because I knew that it would soon be over, and because I felt myself completely healthy. Yet this unusual, restless life must have had more effect upon me than I was aware of. Scarcely had I reached home, and cheered my parents with a comfortable narrative, when I was attacked by a hemorrhage, which, although it did not prove dangerous or lasting, yet left a weakness after it, perceptible for many a day.

Here, then, I had another lesson to repeat. I did it joyfully. Nothing bound me to the world, and I was convinced that here the true good was never to be found; so I waited in the cheerfullest and meekest state; and, after having abdicated life, I was retained in it.

A new trial was awaiting me: my mother took a painful and oppressive ailment, which she had to bear five years, before she paid the debt of nature. All this time we were sharply proved. Often, when her terror grew too strong, she would have us all summoned, in the night, to her bed, that so at least she might be busied, if not bettered, by our presence. The load grew heavier, nay, scarcely to be borne, when my father, too, became unwell. From his youth he had frequently had violent headaches, which, however, at longest never used to last beyond six and thirty hours. But now they were continual; and, when they mounted to a high degree of pain, his moanings tore my very heart. It was in these tempestuous seasons that I chiefly felt my bodily weakness; because it kept me from my holiest and dearest duties, or rendered the performance of them hard to an extreme degree.

It was now that I could try whether the path which I had chosen was the path of fantasy or truth;

whether I had merely thought as others showed me, or the object of my trust had a reality. To my unspeakable support, I always found the latter. The straight direction of my heart to God, the fellowship of the "Beloved Ones,"[1] I had sought and found; and this was what made all things light to me. As a traveller in the dark, my soul, when all was pressing on me from without, hastened to the place of refuge; and never did it return empty.

In later times some champions of religion, who seem to be animated more by zeal than feeling for it, have required of their brethren to produce examples of prayers actually heard; apparently as wishing to have seal and signature, that so they might proceed juridically in the matter. How unknown must the true feeling be to these persons! how few real experiences can they themselves have made!

I can say that I never returned empty, when in straits and oppression I called on God. This is saying infinitely much: more I must not and cannot say. Important as each experience was at the critical moment for myself, the recital of them would be flat, improbable, and insignificant, were I to specify the separate cases. Happy was I, that a thousand little incidents in combination proved, as clearly as the drawing of my breath proved me to be living, that I was not without God in the world. He was near to me: I was before him. This is what, with a diligent avoidance of all theological systematic terms, I can with the greatest truth declare.

Much do I wish, that, in those times too, I had been entirely without system. But which of us arrives early at the happiness of being conscious of his individual self, in its own pure combination, without extraneous forms? I was in earnest with religion. I timidly trusted in the judgments of others: I entirely

[1] So in the original. — Ed.

gave in to the Hallean system of conversion, but my nature would by no means tally with it.

According to this scheme of doctrine, the alteration of the heart must begin with a deep terror on account of sin: the heart in this agony must recognise, in a less or greater degree, the punishment which it has merited, must get a foretaste of hell, and so embitter the delight of sin. At last it feels a very palpable assurance of grace; which, however, in its progress often fades away, and must again be sought with earnest prayer.

Of all this, no jot or tittle happened with me. When I sought God sincerely, he let himself be found of me, and did not reproach me about bygone things. On looking back, I saw well enough where I had been unworthy, where I still was so; but the confession of my faults was altogether without terror. Not for a moment did the fear of hell occur to me; nay, the very notion of a wicked spirit, and a place of punishment and torment after death, could nowise gain admission into the circle of my thoughts. I considered the men who lived without God, whose hearts were shut against the trust in and the love of the Invisible, as already so unhappy, that a hell and external pains appeared to promise rather an alleviation than an increase of their misery. I had but to look upon the persons, in this world, who in their breasts gave scope to hateful feelings; who hardened their hearts against the good of whatever kind, and strove to force the evil on themselves and others; who shut their eyes by day, that so they might deny the shining of the sun. How unutterably wretched did these persons seem to me! Who could have formed a hell to make their situation worse?

This mood of mind continued in me, without change, for half a score of years. It maintained itself through many trials, even at the moving death-bed of my be-

loved mother. I was frank enough, on this occasion, not to hide my comfortable frame of mind from certain pious but rigorously orthodox people; and I had to suffer many a friendly admonition on that score. They reckoned they were just in season, for explaining with what earnestness one should be diligent to lay a right foundation in the days of health and youth.

In earnestness I, too, determined not to fail. For the moment I allowed myself to be convinced; and fain would I have grown, for life, distressed and full of fears. But what was my surprise on finding that I absolutely could not. When I thought of God, I was cheerful and contented: even at the painful end of my dear mother, I did not shudder at the thought of death. Yet I learned many and far other things than my uncalled teachers thought of, in these solemn hours.

By degrees I grew to doubt the dictates of so many famous people, and retained my own sentiments in silence. A certain lady of my friends, to whom I had at first disclosed too much, insisted always on interfering with my business. Of her, too, I was obliged to rid myself: I at last firmly told her, that she might spare herself this labour, as I did not need her counsel; that I knew my God, and would have no guide but him. She was greatly offended: I believe she never quite forgave me.

Such determination to withdraw from the advices and the influence of my friends, in spiritual matters, produced the consequence, that also in my temporal affairs I gained sufficient courage to obey my own persuasions. But for the assistance of my faithful, invisible Leader, I could not have prospered here. I am still gratefully astonished at his wise and happy guidance. No one knew how matters stood with me: even I myself did not know.

The thing, the wicked and inexplicable thing, which separates us from the Being to whom we owe our life,

and in whom all that deserves the name of life must find its nourishment, — the thing which we call sin I yet knew nothing of.

In my intercourse with my invisible Friend, I felt the sweetest enjoyment of all my powers. My desire of constantly enjoying this felicity was so predominant, that I abandoned without hesitation whatever marred our intercourse; and here experience was my best teacher. But it was with me as with sick persons who have no medicine, and try to help themselves by diet: something is accomplished, but far from enough.

I could not always live in solitude, though in it I found the best preservative against the dissipation of my thoughts. On returning to the tumult, the impression it produced upon me was the deeper for my previous loneliness. My most peculiar advantage lay in this, that love for quiet was my ruling passion, and that in the end I still drew back to it. I perceived, as in a kind of twilight, my weakness and my misery, and tried to save myself by avoiding danger and exposure.

For seven years I had used my dietetic scheme. I held myself not wicked, and I thought my state desirable. But for some peculiar circumstances and occurrences I had remained in this position: it was by a curious path that I got farther. Contrary to the advice of all my friends, I entered on a new connection. Their objections, at first, made me pause. I turned to my invisible Leader; and, as he permitted me, I went forward without fear.

A man of spirit, heart, and talents had bought a property beside us. Among the strangers whom I grew acquainted with, were this person and his family. In our manners, domestic economy, and habits we accorded well; and thus we soon approximated to each other.

Philo, as I propose to call him, was already middle-aged: in certain matters he was highly serviceable to my father, whose strength was now decaying. He soon became the friend of the family: and finding in me, as he was pleased to say, a person free alike from the extravagance and emptiness of the great world, and from the narrowness and aridness of the still world in the country, he courted intimacy with me; and erelong we were in one another's confidence. To me he was very pleasing and useful.

Though I did not feel the smallest inclination or capacity for mingling in public business, or seeking any influence on it, yet I liked to hear about such matters, — liked to know whatever happened far and near. Of worldly things, I loved to get a clear though unconcerned perception: feeling, sympathy, affection, I reserved for God, for my people, and my friends.

The latter were, if I may say so, jealous of Philo, in my new connection with him. In more than one sense, they were right in warning me about it. I suffered much in secret, for even I could not consider their remonstrances as altogether empty or selfish. I had been accustomed, from of old, to give a reason for my views and conduct; but in this case my conviction would not follow. I prayed to God, that here, as elsewhere, he would warn, restrain, and guide me; and, as my heart on this did not dissuade me, I went forward on my way with comfort.

Philo, on the whole, had a remote resemblance to Narciss; only a pious education had more enlivened and concentrated his feelings. He had less vanity, more character; and in business, if Narciss was delicate, exact, persevering, indefatigable, the other was clear, sharp, quick, and capable of working with incredible ease. By means of him I learned the secret history of almost every noble personage with whose exterior I had got acquainted in society. It was

pleasant for me to behold the tumult, off my watch-tower from afar. Philo could now hide nothing from me: he confided to me, by degrees, his own concerns, both inward and outward. I was in fear because of him, for I foresaw certain circumstances and entanglements; and the mischief came more speedily than I had looked for. There were some confessions he had still kept back, and even at last he told me only what enabled me to guess the worst.

What an effect had this upon my heart! I attained experiences which to me were altogether new. With infinite sorrow I beheld an Agathon, who, educated in the groves of Delphi, still owed his school-fees, which he was now obliged to pay with their accumulated interest; and this Agathon was my especial friend. My sympathy was lively and complete; I suffered with him; both of us were in the strangest state.

After having long occupied myself with the temper of his mind, I at last turned round to contemplate my own. The thought, "Thou art no better than he," rose like a little cloud before me, and gradually expanded till it darkened all my soul.

I now not only thought myself no better than he: I felt this, and felt it as I should not wish to do again. Nor was it any transitory mood. For more than a year, I was compelled to feel, that, had not an unseen hand restrained me, I might have become a Girard, a Cartouche, a Damiens, or any wretch you can imagine. The tendencies to this I traced too clearly in my heart. Heavens, what a discovery!

If hitherto I had never been able, in the faintest degree, to recognise in myself the reality of sin by experience, its possibility was now become apparent to me by anticipations in the frightfullest manner. And yet I knew not evil; I but feared it: I felt that I might be guilty, and could not accuse myself of being so.

Deeply as I was convinced that such a temperament of soul, as I now saw mine to be, could never be adapted for that union with the invisible Being which I hoped for after death, I did not, in the smallest, fear that I should finally be separated from him. With all the wickedness which I discovered in my heart, I still loved *Him:* I hated what I felt, nay, wished to hate it still more earnestly; my whole desire was, to be delivered from this sickness, and this tendency to sickness; and I was persuaded that the great Physician would at length vouchsafe his help.

The sole question was, What medicine will cure this malady? The practice of virtue? This I could not for a moment think. For ten years I had already practised more than mere virtue; and the horrors now first discovered had, all the while, lain hidden at the bottom of my soul. Might they not have broken out with me, as they did with David when he looked on Bathsheba? Yet was not he a friend of God! and was not I assured, in my inmost heart, that God was my friend?

Was it, then, an unavoidable infirmity of human nature? Must we just content ourselves in feeling and acknowledging the sovereignty of inclination? And, with the best will, is there nothing left for us but to abhor the fault we have committed, and on the like occasion to commit it again?

From systems of morality I could obtain no comfort. Neither their severity, by which they try to bend our inclinations, nor their attractiveness, by which they try to place our inclinations on the side of virtue, gave me any satisfaction. The fundamental notions, which I had imbibed from intercourse with my invisible Friend, were of far higher value to me.

Once, while I was studying the songs composed by David after that tremendous fall, it struck me very much that he traced his indwelling corruption even in

the substance out of which he had been shaped; yet that he wished to be freed from sin, and that he earnestly entreated for a pure heart.

But how was this to be attained? The answer from Scripture I was well aware of: "that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin," was a Bible truth which I had long known. But now, for the first time, I observed that as yet I had never understood this oft-repeated saying. The questions, What does it mean? How is it to be? were day and night working out their answers in me. At last I thought I saw, as by a gleam of light, that what I sought was to be found in the incarnation of the everlasting Word, by whom all things, even we ourselves, were made. That the Eternal descended as an inhabitant to the depths in which we dwell, which he surveys and comprehends; that he passed through our lot from stage to stage, from conception and birth to the grave; that by this marvellous circuit he again mounted to those shining heights, whither we too must rise in order to be happy: all this was revealed to me, as in a dawning remoteness.

Oh! why must we, in speaking of such things, make use of figures which can only indicate external situations? Where is there in his eyes aught high or deep, aught dark or clear? It is we only that have an Under and Upper, a night and day. And even for this did he become like us, since otherwise we could have had no part in him.

But how shall we obtain a share in this priceless benefit? "By faith," the Scripture says. And what is faith? To consider the account of an event as true, what help can this afford me? I must be enabled to appropriate its effects, its consequences. This appropriating faith must be a state of mind peculiar, and, to the natural man, unknown.

"Now, gracious Father, grant me faith!" so prayed

I once, in the deepest heaviness of heart. I was leaning on a little table, where I sat: my tear-stained countenance was hidden in my hands. I was now in the condition in which we seldom are, but in which we are required to be, if God is to regard our prayers.

Oh, that I could but paint what I felt then! A sudden force drew my soul to the cross where Jesus once expired: it was a sudden force, a pull, I cannot name it otherwise, such as leads our soul to an absent loved one; an approximation, which, perhaps, is far more real and true than we imagine. So did my soul approach the Son of man, who died upon the cross; and that instant did I know what faith was.

"This is faith!" said I, and started up as if half frightened. I now endeavoured to get certain of my feeling, of my view; and shortly I became convinced that my soul had acquired a power of soaring upwards which was altogether new to it.

Words fail us in describing such emotions. I could most distinctly separate them from all fantasy: they were entirely without fantasy, without image; yet they gave us just such certainty of their referring to some object as our imagination gives us when it paints the features of an absent lover.

When the first rapture was over, I observed that my present condition of mind had formerly been known to me; only I had never felt it in such strength; I had never held it fast, never made it mine. I believe, indeed, every human soul at intervals feels something of it. Doubtless it is this which teaches every mortal that there is a God.

With such faculty, wont from of old to visit me now and then, I had hitherto been well content: and had not, by a singular arrangement of events, that unexpected sorrow weighed upon me for a twelvemonth; had not my own ability and strength, on that occasion, altogether lost credit with me, — I perhaps might have

remained content with such a state of matters all my days.

But now, since that great moment, I had, as it were, got wings. I could mount aloft above what used to threaten me; as the bird can fly singing and with ease across the fiercest stream, while the little dog stands anxiously baying on the bank.

My joy was indescribable; and, though I did not mention it to any one, my people soon observed an unaccustomed cheerfulness in me, and could not understand the reason of my joy. Had I but for ever held my peace, and tried to nourish this serene temper in my soul; had I not allowed myself to be misled by circumstances, so as to reveal my secret, — I might then have been saved once more a long and tedious circuit.

As in the previous ten years of my Christian course, this necessary force had not existed in my soul, I had just been in the case of other worthy people, — had helped myself by keeping my fancy always full of images, which had some reference to God, — a practice so far truly useful; for noxious images and their baneful consequences are by that means kept away. Often, too, our spirit seizes one or other of these spiritual images, and mounts with it a little way upward, like a young bird fluttering from twig to twig.

Images and impressions pointing toward God are presented to us by the institutions of the Church, by organs, bells, singing, and particularly by the preaching of our pastors. Of these I used to be unspeakably desirous; no weather, no bodily weakness, could keep me from church; the sound of the Sunday bells was the only thing that rendered me impatient on a sick-bed. Our head court-chaplain, a gifted man, I heard with great pleasure; his colleagues, too, I liked: and I could pick the golden apple of the Word from the common fruit, with which on earthen platters it was mingled. With public ordinances, all sorts of private

exercises were combined; and these, too, only nourished fancy and a finer kind of sense. I was so accustomed to this track, I reverenced it so much, that even now no higher one occurred to me. For my soul has only feelers, and not eyes: it gropes, but does not see. Ah! that it could get eyes, and look!

Now again, therefore, I went with a longing mind to sermon; but, alas! what happened? I no longer found what I was wont to find. These preachers were blunting their teeth on the shell, while I enjoyed the kernel. I soon grew weary of them; and I had already been so spoiled, that I could not be content with the little they afforded me. I required images, I wanted impressions from without, and reckoned it a pure spiritual desire that I felt.

Philo's parents had been in connection with the Herrnhuter Community: in his library were many writings of Count Zinzendorf's. He had spoken with me, more than once, very candidly and clearly on the subject; inviting me to turn over one or two of these treatises, if it were but for the sake of studying a psychological phenomenon. I looked upon the count, and those that followed him, as very heterodox; and so the Ebersdorf Hymn-book, which my friend had pressed upon me, lay unread.

However, in this total destitution of external excitements for my soul, I opened the hymn-book, as it were, by chance, and found in it, to my astonishment, some songs which actually, though under a fantastic form, appeared to shadow what I felt. The originality and simplicity of their expression drew me on. It seemed to be peculiar emotions expressed in a peculiar way; no school technology suggested any notion of formality or commonplace. I was persuaded that these people felt as I did: I was very happy to lay hold of here and there a stanza in their songs, to fix it in my memory, and carry it about with me for days.

Since the moment when the truth had been revealed to me, some three months had in this way passed on. At last I came to the resolution of disclosing everything to Philo, and asking him to let me have those writings, about which I had now become immoderately curious. Accordingly I did so, notwithstanding there was something in my heart which earnestly dissuaded me.

I circumstantially related to him all the story; and as he was himself a leading person in it, and my narrative conveyed the sharpest reprimand on him, he felt surprised and moved to an extreme degree. He melted into tears. I rejoiced; believing that, in his mind also, a full and fundamental change had taken place.

He provided me with all the writings I could require, and now I had excess of nourishment for my imagination. I made rapid progress in the Zinzendorfic mode of thought and speech. And be it not supposed that I am yet incapable of prizing the peculiar turn and manner of the count. I willingly do him justice: he is no empty fantast; he speaks of mighty truths, and mostly in a bold, figurative style; the people who despise him know not either how to value or discriminate his qualities.

At that time I became exceedingly attached to him. Had I been mistress of myself, I would certainly have left my friends and country, and gone to join him. We should infallibly have understood each other, and should hardly have agreed together long.

Thanks to my better genius, that now kept me so confined by my domestic duties! I reckoned it a distant journey if I visited the garden. The charge of my aged, weakly father afforded me employment enough; and in hours of recreation, I had Fancy to procure me pastime. The only mortal whom I saw was Philo; he was highly valued by my father; but, with me, his intimacy had been cooled a little by the

late explanation. Its influence on him had not penetrated deep: and, as some attempts to talk in my dialect had not succeeded with him, he avoided touching on this subject; and the rather, as his extensive knowledge put it always in his power to introduce new topics in his conversation.

I was thus a Herrnhut sister on my own footing. I had especially to hide this new turn of my temper and my inclinations from the head court-chaplain, whom, as my father confessor, I had much cause to honour, and whose high merits his extreme aversion to the Herrnhut Community did not diminish, in my eyes, even then. Unhappily this worthy person had to suffer many troubles on account of me and others.

Several years ago he had become acquainted with an upright, pious gentleman, residing in a distant quarter, and had long continued in unbroken correspondence with him, as with one who truly sought God. How painful was it to the spiritual leader, when this gentleman subsequently joined himself to the Community of Herrnhut, where he lived for a long while! How delightful, on the other hand, when at length he quarrelled with the brethren, determined to settle in our neighbourhood, and seemed once more to yield himself completely to the guidance of his ancient friend!

The stranger was presented, as in triumph, by the upper pastor, to all the chosen lambs of his fold. To our house alone he was not introduced, because my father did not now see company. The gentleman obtained no little approbation: he combined the polish of the court with the winning manner of the brethren; and, having also many fine qualities by nature, he soon became the favourite saint with all who knew him, — a result at which the chaplain was exceedingly contented. But, alas! it was merely in externals that the gentleman had split with the community: in his heart he was entirely a Herrnhuter. He was, in truth, concerned

for the reality of the matter; but yet the gimcracks, which the count had stuck round it, were, at the same time, quite adapted to his taste. Besides, he had now become accustomed to this mode of speaking and conceiving: and, if he had to hide it carefully from his old friend, the gladder was he, in any knot of trusty persons, to come forth with his couplets, litanies, and little figures; in which, as might have been supposed, he met with great applause.

I knew nothing of the whole affair, and wandered quietly along in my separate path. For a good while we continued mutually unknown.

Once, in a leisure hour, I happened to visit a lady who was sick. I found several acquaintances with her, and soon perceived that my appearance had cut short their conversation. I affected not to notice anything, but saw erelong, with great surprise, some Herrnhut figures stuck upon the wall in elegant frames. Quickly comprehending what had passed before my entrance, I expressed my pleasure at the sight, in a few suitable verses.

Conceive the wonder of my friends! We explained ourselves: instantly we were agreed, and in each other's confidence.

I often henceforth sought opportunities of going out. Unhappily I found such only once in the three or four weeks; yet I grew acquainted with our gentleman apostle, and by degrees with all the body. I visited their meetings when I could: with my social disposition, it was quite delightful for me to communicate to others, and to hear from them, the feelings which, till now, I had conceived and harboured by myself.

But I was not so completely taken with my friends, as not to see that few of them could really feel the sense of those affecting words and emblems; and that from these they drew as little benefit as formerly they did from the symbolic language of the Church. Yet,

notwithstanding, I went on with them, not letting this disturb me. I thought I was not called to search and try the hearts of others. Had not I, too, by long-continued innocent exercisings of that sort, been prepared for something better? I had my share of profit from our meetings: in speaking, I insisted on attending to the sense and spirit, which, in things so delicate, is rather apt to be disguised by words than indicated by them; and for the rest, I left, with silent tolerance, each to act according to his own conviction.

These quiet times of secret social joy were shortly followed by storms of open bickering and contradiction, — contentions which excited great commotion, I might almost say occasioned not a little scandal, in court and town. The period was now arrived when our chaplain, that stout gainsayer of the Herrnhut Brethren, must discover to his deep, but, I trust, sanctified humiliation, that his best and once most zealous hearers were now all leaning to the side of that community. He was excessively provoked: in the first moments he forgot all moderation, and could not, even if he had inclined it, retract afterward. Violent debates took place, in which happily I was not mentioned, both as being an accidental member of those hated meetings, and then because, in respect of certain civic matters, our zealous preacher could not safely disoblige either my father or my friend. With silent satisfaction I continued neutral. It was irksome to me to converse about such feelings and objects, even with well-affected people, when they could not penetrate the deepest sense, and lingered merely on the surface. But to strive with adversaries, about things on which even friends could scarcely understand each other, seemed to me unprofitable, nay, pernicious. For I soon perceived, that many amiable noblemen, who on this occurrence could not shut their hearts to enmity and hatred, had rapidly passed over to injustice, and, in

order to defend an outward form, had almost sacrificed their most substantial duties.

Far as the worthy clergyman might, in the present case, be wrong; much as others tried to irritate me at him, — I could never hesitate to give him my sincere respect. I knew him well: I could candidly transport myself into his way of looking at these matters. I have never seen a man without his weaknesses: only in distinguished men they strike us more. We wish, and will at all rates have it, that persons privileged as they are should at the same time pay no tribute, no tax whatever. I honoured him as a superior man, and hoped to use the influence of my calm neutrality to bring about, if not a peace, at least a truce. I know not what my efforts might have done; but God concluded the affair more briefly, and took the chaplain to himself. On his coffin all wept, who had lately been striving with him about words. His uprightness, his fear of God, no one had ever doubted.

I, too, was erelong forced to lay aside this Herrnhut doll-work, which, by means of these contentions, now appeared before me in a rather different light. Our uncle had, in silence, executed his intentions with my sister. He offered her a young man of rank and fortune as a bridegroom, and showed, by a rich dowry, what might be expected of himself. My father joyfully consented: my sister was free and forewarned; she did not hesitate to change her state. The bridal was appointed at my uncle's castle: family and friends were all invited, and we came together in the cheerfullest mood.

For the first time in my life, the aspect of a house excited admiration in me. I had often heard of my uncle's taste, of his Italian architect, of his collections and his library; but, comparing this with what I had already seen, I had formed a very vague and fluctuating picture of it in my thoughts. Great, accordingly,

was my surprise at the earnest and harmonious impression which I felt on entering the house, and which every hall and chamber deepened. If elsewhere pomp and decoration had but dissipated my attention, I felt here concentrated and drawn back upon myself. In like manner the preparatives for these solemnities and festivals produced a silent pleasure, by their air of dignity and splendour; and to me it seemed as inconceivable that one man could have invented and arranged all this, as that more than one could have worked together in so high a spirit. Yet, withal, the landlord and his people were entirely natural: not a trace of stiffness or of empty form was to be seen.

The wedding itself was managed in a striking way: an exquisite strain of vocal music came upon us by surprise, and the clergyman went through the ceremony with a singular solemnity. I was standing by Philo at the time; and, instead of a congratulation, he whispered in my ear, "When I saw your sister give away her hand, I felt as if a stream of boiling water had been poured over me." "Why so?" I inquired. "It is always the way with me," said he, "when I see two people joined." I laughed at him, but I have often since had cause to recollect his words.

The revel of the party, among whom were many young people, looked particularly glittering and airy; as everything around us was dignified and serious. The furniture, plate, table-ware, and table-ornaments accorded with the general whole; and if in other houses you would say the architect was of the school of the confectioner, it here appeared as if even our confectioner and butler had taken lessons from the architect.

We stayed together several days, and our intelligent and gifted landlord had variedly provided for the entertainment of his guests. I did not in the present case repeat the melancholy proof, which has so often in my

life been forced upon me, how unhappily a large mixed company are situated, when, altogether left to themselves, they have to select the most general and vapid pastimes, that the fools of the party may not want amusement, however it may fare with those that are not such.

My uncle had arranged it altogether differently. Two or three marshals, if I may call them so, had been appointed by him: one of them had charge of providing entertainment for the young. Dances, excursions, little games, were of his invention and under his direction: and as young people take delight in being out-of-doors, and do not fear the influences of the air, the garden and garden-hall had been assigned to them; while some additional pavilions and galleries had been erected and appended to the latter, formed of boards and canvas merely, but in such proportions, so elegant and noble, they reminded one of nothing but stone and marble.

How rare is a festivity in which the person who invites the guests feels also that it is his duty to provide for their conveniences and wants of every kind!

Hunting and card parties, short promenades, opportunities for trustful private conversations, were afforded the elder persons; and whoever wished to go earliest to bed was sure to be lodged the farthest from noise.

By this happy order, the space we lived in appeared to be a little world: and yet, considered narrowly, the castle was not large; without an accurate knowledge of it, and without the spirit of its owner, it would have been impossible to entertain so many people here, and quarter each according to his humour.

As the aspect of a well-formed person pleases us, so also does a fair establishment, by means of which the presence of a rational, intelligent mind is manifested. We feel a joy in entering even a cleanly house, though it may be tasteless in its structure and its decorations,

because it shows us the presence of a person cultivated in at least one sense. Doubly pleasing is it, therefore, when, from a human dwelling, the spirit of a higher though merely sensual culture speaks to us.

All this was vividly impressed on my observation at my uncle's castle. I had heard and read much of art; Philo, too, was a lover of pictures, and had a fine collection: I myself had often practised drawing; but I had been too deeply occupied with my emotions, striving exclusively after the one thing needful, which alone I was bent on carrying to perfection; and then, such objects of art as I had hitherto seen, appeared, like all other worldly objects, to distract my thoughts. But now, for the first time, outward things had led me back upon myself: I now first perceived the difference between the natural charm of the nightingale's song, and that of a four-voiced anthem pealed from the expressive organs of men.

My joy over this discovery I did not hide from my uncle, who, when all the rest were settled at their posts, was wont to come and talk with me in private. He spoke with great modesty of what he possessed and had produced here, with great decision of the views in which it had been gathered and arranged: and I could easily observe that he spoke with a forbearance toward me; seeming, in his usual way, to rate the excellence which he himself possessed below that other excellence, which, in my way of thinking, was the best and properest.

"If we can conceive it possible," he once observed, "that the Creator of the world himself assumed the form of his creature, and lived in that manner for a time upon earth, this creature must appear to us of infinite perfection, because susceptible of such a combination with its Maker. Hence, in our idea of man, there can be no inconsistency with our idea of God; and if we often feel a certain disagreement with him

and remoteness from him, it is but the more on that account our duty, not like advocates of the wicked Spirit, to keep our eyes continually upon the nakedness and weakness of our nature, but rather to seek out every property and beauty by which our pretension to a similarity with the Divinity may be made good."

I smiled, and answered, "Do not make me blush, dear uncle, by your complaisance in talking in my language! What you have to say is of such importance to me, that I wish to hear it in your own most peculiar style; and then what parts of it I cannot quite appropriate I will endeavour to translate."

"I may continue," he replied, "in my own most peculiar way, without any alteration of my tone. Man's highest merit always is, as much as possible to rule external circumstances, and as little as possible to let himself be ruled by them. Life lies before us, as a huge quarry lies before the architect: he deserves not the name of architect, except when, out of this fortuitous mass, he can combine, with the greatest economy and fitness and durability, some form, the pattern of which originated in his spirit. All things without us, nay, I may add, all things on us, are mere elements; but deep within us lies the creative force, which out of these can produce what they were meant to be, and which leaves us neither sleep nor rest, till, in one way or another, without us or on us, that same have been produced. You, my dear niece, have, it may be, chosen the better part; you have striven to bring your moral being, your earnest, lovely nature, into accordance with itself and with the Highest: but neither ought we to be blamed, when we strive to get acquainted with the sentient man in all his comprehensiveness, and to bring about an active harmony among his powers."

By such discoursing, we in time grew more familiar; and I begged of him to speak with me as with himself,

omitting every sort of condescension. "Do not think," replied my uncle, "that I flatter you when I commend your mode of thinking and acting. I reverence the individual who understands distinctly what it is he wishes; who unweariedly advances, who knows the means conducive to his object, and can seize and use them. How far his object may be great or little, may merit praise or censure, is the next consideration with me. Believe me, love, most part of all the misery and mischief, of all that is denominated evil in the world, arises from the fact, that men are too remiss to get a proper knowledge of their aims, and, when they do know them, to work intensely in attaining them. They seem to me like people who have taken up a notion that they must and will erect a tower, and who yet expend on the foundation not more stones and labour than would be sufficient for a hut. If you, my friend, whose highest want it was to perfect and unfold your moral nature, had, instead of those bold and noble sacrifices, merely trimmed between your duties to yourself and to your family, your bridegroom, or perhaps your husband, you must have lived in constant contradiction with your feelings, and never could have had a peaceful moment."

"You employ the word sacrifice," I answered here: "and I have often thought, that to a higher purpose, as to a divinity, we offer up by way of sacrifice a thing of smaller value; feeling like persons who should willingly and gladly bring a favourite lamb to the altar for the health of a beloved father."

"Whatever it may be," said he, "reason or feeling, that commands us to give up the one thing for the other, to choose the one before the other, decision and perseverance are, in my opinion, the noblest qualities of man. You cannot have the ware and the money both at the same time; and he who always hankers for the ware without having heart to give the money

for it, is no better off than he who repents him of the purchase when the ware is in his hands. But I am far from blaming men on this account: it is not they that are to blame; it is the difficult, entangled situation they are in: they know not how to guide themselves in its perplexities. Thus, for instance, you will on the average find fewer bad economists in the country than in towns, and fewer again in small towns than in great; and why? Man is intended for a limited condition; objects that are simple, near, determinate, he comprehends, and he becomes accustomed to employ such means as are at hand; but, on entering a wider field, he now knows neither what he would nor what he should; and it amounts to quite the same, whether his attention is distracted by the multitude of objects, or is overpowered by their magnitude and dignity. It is always a misfortune for him when he is induced to struggle after anything with which he cannot connect himself by some regular exertion of his powers.

"Certainly," pursued he, "without earnestness there is nothing to be done in life; yet, among the people whom we name cultivated men, little earnestness is to be found: in labours and employments, in arts, nay, even in recreations, they proceed, if I may say so, with a sort of self-defence; they live, as they read a heap of newspapers, only to have done with it; they remind one of that young Englishman at Rome, who said, with a contented air one evening in some company, that to-day he had despatched six churches and two galleries. They wish to know and learn a multitude of things, and precisely those they have the least concern with; and they never see that hunger is not stilled by snapping at the air. When I become acquainted with a man, my first inquiry is, With what does he employ himself, and how, and with what degree of perseverance? The answer regulates the interest I shall take in him for life."

"My dear uncle," I replied, "you are, perhaps, too rigorous: you perhaps withdraw your helping hand from here and there a worthy man to whom you might be useful."

"Can it be imputed as a fault," said he, "to one who has so long and vainly laboured on them and about them? How much we have to suffer in our youth from men who think they are inviting us to a delightful pleasure-party, when they undertake to introduce us to the Danaides or Sisyphus! Heaven be praised! I have rid myself of these people: if one of them unfortunately comes within my sphere, I forthwith, in the politest manner, compliment him out again. It is from such persons that you hear the bitterest complaints about the miserable course of things, the aridity of science, the levity of artists, the emptiness of poets, and much more of that sort. They do not recollect that they, and the many like them, are the very persons who would never read a book which had been written just as they require it; that true poetry is alien to them; that even an excellent work of art can never gain their approbation except by means of prejudice. But let us now break off, for this is not the time to rail or to complain."

He directed my attention to the different pictures hanging on the wall: my eye dwelt on those whose look was beautiful or subject striking. This he permitted for awhile: at last he said, "Bestow a little notice on the spirit manifested in these other works. Good minds delight to trace the finger of the Deity in nature: why not likewise pay some small regard to the hand of his imitator?" He then led my observation to some unobtrusive figures; endeavouring to make me understand that it was the history of art alone which could give us an idea of the worth and dignity of any work of art; that we should know the weary steps of mere handicraft and mechanism, over which the man

of talents has struggled in the course of centuries, before we can conceive how it is possible for the man of genius to move with airy freedom on the pinnacle whose very aspect makes us giddy.

With this view he had formed a beautiful series of works; and, whilst he explained it, I could not help conceiving that I saw before me a similitude of moral culture. When I expressed my thought to him, he answered, "You are altogether right; and we see from this, that those do not act well, who, in a solitary, exclusive manner, follow moral culivation by itself. On the contrary, it will be found, that he whose spirit strives for a development of that kind, has likewise every reason, at the same time, to improve his finer sentient powers; that so he may not run the risk of sinking from his moral height by giving way to the enticements of a lawless fancy, and degrading his moral nature by allowing it to take delight in tasteless baubles, if not in something worse.

I did not suspect him of levelling at me; but I felt myself struck, when I reflected how many insipidities there might be in the songs that used to edify me, and how little favour the figures which had joined themselves to my religious ideas would have found in the eyes of my uncle.

Philo, in the meantime, had frequently been busied in the library: he now took me along with him. We admired the selection, as well as the multitude, of books. They had been collected on my uncle's general principle: there were none to be found among them but such as either lead to correct knowledge, or teach right arrangement; such as either give us fit materials, or further the concordance of our spirit.

In the course of my life I had read very largely; in certain branches, there was almost no work unknown to me: the more pleasant was it here to speak about the general survey of the whole; to mark deficiencies,

and not, as elsewhere, see nothing but a hampered confusion or a boundless expansion.

Here, too, we became acquainted with a very interesting, quiet man. He was a physician and a naturalist: he seemed rather one of the *Penates* than of the inmates. He showed us the museum, which, like the library, was fixed in glass cases to the walls of the chambers, adorning and ennobling the space, which it did not crowd. On this occasion I recalled with joy the days of my youth, and showed my father many of the things he had been wont to lay upon the sick-bed of his little child, just opening its little eyes to look into the world then. At the same time the physician, in our present and following conversations, did not scruple to avow how near he approximated to me in respect of my religious sentiments: he warmly praised my uncle for his tolerance, and his esteem of all that testified or forwarded the worth and unity of human nature; admitting, also, that he called for a similar return from others, and would shun and condemn nothing else so heartily as individual pretension and narrow exclusiveness.

Since the nuptials of my sister, joy had sparkled in the eyes of our uncle: he often spoke with me of what he meant to do for her and for her children. He had several fine estates: he managed them himself, and hoped to leave them in the best condition to his nephews. Regarding the small estate where we at present were, he appeared to entertain peculiar thoughts. "I will leave it to none," said he, "but to a person who can understand and value and enjoy what it contains, and who feels how loudly every man of wealth and rank, especially in Germany, is called on to exhibit something like a model to others."

Most of his guests were now gone: we, too, were making ready for departure, thinking we had seen the final scene of this solemnity, when his attention in

affording us some dignified enjoyment produced a new surprise. We had mentioned to him the delight which the chorus of voices, suddenly commencing without accompaniment of any instrument, had given us, at my sister's marriage. We hinted, at the same time, how pleasant it would be were such a thing repeated; but he seemed to pay no heed to us. The livelier was our surprise, when he said, one evening, "The music of the dance has died away; our transitory, youthful friends have left us; the happy pair themselves have a more serious look than they had some days ago. To part at such a time, when, perhaps, we shall never meet again, certainly never without changes, exalts us to a solemn mood, which I know not how to entertain more nobly than by the music you were lately signifying a desire to have repeated."

The chorus, which had in the meanwhile gathered strength, and by secret practice more expertness, was accordingly made to sing to us a series of four and of eight voiced melodies, which, if I may say so, gave a real foretaste of bliss. Till then I had only known the pious mode of singing, as good souls practise it, frequently with hoarse pipes, imagining, like wild birds, that they are praising God, while they procure a pleasant feeling to themselves. Or, perhaps, I had listened to the vain music of concerts, in which you are at best invited to admire the talent of the singer, and very seldom have even a transient enjoyment. Now, however, I was listening to music, which, as it originated in the deepest feeling of the most accomplished human beings, was, by suitable and practised organs in harmonious unity, made again to address the deepest and best feelings of man, and to impress him at that moment with a lively sense of his likeness to the Deity. They were all devotional songs, in the Latin language: they sat like jewels in the golden ring of a polished intellectual conversation; and, without pretending to

edify, they elevated me and made me happy in the most spiritual manner.

At our departure he presented all of us with handsome gifts. To me he gave the cross of my order, more beautifully and artfully worked and enamelled than I had ever seen it before. It was hung upon a large brilliant, by which also it was fastened to the chain: this he gave me, he said, "as the noblest stone in the cabinet of a collector."

My sister, with her husband, went to their estates, the rest of us to our abodes; appearing to ourselves, so far as outward circumstances were concerned, to have returned to quite an every-day existence. We had been, as it were, dropped from a palace of the fairies down upon the common earth, and were again obliged to help ourselves as we best could.

The singular experiences which this new circle had afforded left a fine impression on my mind. This, however, did not long continue in its first vivacity: though my uncle tried to nourish and renew it by sending me certain of his best and most pleasing works of art; changing them, from time to time, with others which I had not seen.

I had been so much accustomed to be busied with myself, in regulating the concerns of my heart and temper, and conversing on these matters with persons of a like mind, that I could not long study any work of art attentively without being turned by it back upon myself. I was used to look at a picture or copper-plate merely as at the letters of a book. Fine printing pleases well, but who would read a book for the beauty of the printing? In like manner I required of each pictorial form that it should tell me something, should instruct, affect, improve me; and, after all my uncle's letters to expound his works of art, say what he would, I continued in my former humour.

Yet not only my peculiar disposition, but external

incidents and changes in our family, still farther drew me back from contemplations of that nature; nay, for some time even from myself. I had to suffer and to do more than my slender strength seemed fit for.

My maiden sister had, till now, been as a right arm to me. Healthy, strong, unspeakably good-natured, she had managed all the housekeeping; I myself being busied with the personal nursing of our aged father. She was seized with a catarrh, which changed to a disorder of the lungs: in three weeks she was lying in her coffin. Her death inflicted wounds on me, the scars of which I am not yet willing to examine.

I was lying sick before they buried her: the old ailment in my breast appeared to be awakening; I coughed with violence, and was so hoarse I could not speak beyond a whisper.

My married sister, out of fright and grief, was brought to bed before her time. Our old father thought he was about to lose at once his children and the hope of their posterity; his natural tears increased my sorrow: I prayed to God that he would give me back a sufferable state of health. I asked him but to spare my life till my father should die. I recovered: I was what I reckoned well, being able to discharge my duties, though with pain.

My sister was again with child. Many cares, which in such cases are committed to the mother, in the present instance fell to me. She was not altogether happy with her husband; this was to be hidden from our father: I was often made judge of their disputes, in which I could decide with the greater safety, as my brother trusted in me; and the two were really worthy persons, only each of them, instead of humouring, endeavoured to convince, the other, and, out of eagerness to live in constant harmony, never could agree. I now learned to mingle seriously in worldly matters, and to practise what of old I had but sung.

My sister bore a son: the frailty of my father did not hinder him from travelling to her. The sight of the child exceedingly enlivened and cheered him; at the christening, contrary to his custom, he seemed as if inspired: nay, I might say like a Genius with two faces. With the one, he looked joyfully forward to those regions which he soon hoped to enter; with the other, to the new, hopeful, earthly life which had arisen in the boy descended from him. On our journey home he never wearied talking to me of the child, its form, its health, and his wish that the gifts of this new denizen of earth might be rightly cultivated. His reflections on the subject lasted when we had arrived at home: it was not till some days afterward that I observed a kind of fever in him, which displayed itself, without shivering, in a sort of languid heat commencing after dinner. He did not yield, however: he went out as usual in the mornings, faithfully attending to the duties of his office, till at last continuous serious symptoms kept him within doors.

I never shall forget with what distinctness, clearness, and repose of mind he settled in the greatest order the concerns of his house, nay, the arrangements of his funeral, as he would have done a business of some other person.

With a cheerfulness which he never used to show, and which now mounted to a lively joy, he said to me, "Where is the fear of death which I once felt? Shall I shrink at departing? I have a gracious God; the grave awakens no terror in me; I have an eternal life."

To recall the circumstances of his death, which shortly followed, forms one of the most pleasing entertainments of my solitude: the visible workings of a higher Power in that solemn time, no one shall ever argue from me.

The death of my beloved father altogether changed my mode of life. From the strictest obedience, the

narrowest confinement, I passed at once into the greatest freedom: I enjoyed it like a sort of food from which one has long abstained. Formerly I very seldom spent two hours from home: now I very seldom lived a day there. My friends, whom I had been allowed to visit only by hurried snatches, wished now to have my company without interruption, as I did to have theirs. I was often asked to dinner: at walks and pleasure-jaunts I never failed. But, when once the circle had been fairly run, I saw that the invaluable happiness of liberty consisted, not in doing what one pleases and what circumstances may invite to, but in being able, without hindrance or restraint, to do in the direct way what one regards as right and proper; and, in this instance, I was old enough to reach a valuable truth, without smarting for my ignorance.

One pleasure I could not deny myself: it was, as soon as might be, to renew and strengthen my connection with the Herrnhut Brethren. I hastened, accordingly, to visit one of their establishments at no great distance; but here I by no means found what I had been anticipating. I was frank enough to signify my disappointment, which they tried to soften by alleging that the present settlement was nothing to a full and fitly organised community. This I did not take upon me to deny; yet, in my thought, the genuine spirit of the matter might have displayed itself in a small body as well as in a great one.

One of their bishops, who was present, a personal disciple of the count, took considerable pains with me. He spoke English perfectly; and as I, too, understood a little of it, he reckoned this a token that we both belonged to one class. I, however, reckoned nothing of the kind: his conversation did not in the least satisfy me. He had been a cutler; was a native of Mo-

ravia; his mode of thought still savoured of the artisan. With Herr Von L——, who had been a major in the French service, I got upon a better footing: yet I could never bring myself to the submissiveness he showed to his superiors; nay, I felt as if you had given me a box on the ear, when I saw the major's wife, and other women more or less like ladies, take the bishop's hand and kiss it. Meanwhile a journey into Holland was proposed; which, however, doubtless for my good, did not take place.

My sister had been delivered of a daughter; and now it was the turn of us women to exult, and consider how the little creature should be bred like one of us. The husband, on the other hand, was not so satisfied, when in the following year another daughter saw the light: with his large estates, he wanted to have boys about him, who in future might assist him in his management.

My health was feeble: I kept myself in peace, and, by a quiet mode of life, in tolerable equilibrium. I was not afraid of death; nay, I wished to die: yet I secretly perceived that God was granting time for me to prove my soul, and to advance still nearer to himself. In my many sleepless nights, especially, I have at times felt something which I cannot undertake to describe.

It was as if my soul were thinking separately from the body: she looked upon the body as a foreign substance, as we look upon a garment. She pictured with extreme vivacity events and times long past, and felt, by means of this, events that were to follow. Those times are all gone by; what follows likewise will go by; the body, too, will fall to pieces like a vesture; but I, the well-known I, I am.

The thought is great, exalted, and consoling; yet an excellent friend, with whom I every day became more intimate, instructed me to dwell on it as little as I

could. This was the physician whom I met in my uncle's house, and who had since accurately informed himself about the temper of my body and my spirit. He showed me how much these feelings, when we cherish them within us independently of outward objects, tend, as it were, to excavate us, and to undermine the whole foundation of our being. "To be active," he would say, "is the primary vocation of man: all the intervals in which he is obliged to rest, he should employ in gaining clearer knowledge of external things; for this will in its turn facilitate activity.

This friend was acquainted with my custom of looking on my body as an outward object: he knew also that I pretty well understood my constitution, my disorder, and the medicines of use for it; nay, that, by continual sufferings of my own or other people's, I had really grown a kind of half-doctor: he now carried forward my attention from the human body, and the drugs which act upon it, to the kindred objects of creation; he led me up and down as in the paradise of the first man; only, if I may continue my comparison, allowing me to trace, in dim remoteness, the Creator walking in the garden in the cool of the evening.

How gladly did I now see God in nature, when I bore him with such certainty within my heart! How interesting to me was his handiwork! how thankful did I feel that he had pleased to quicken me with the breath of his mouth!

We again had hopes that my sister would present us with a boy: her husband waited anxiously for that event, but did not live to see it. He died in consequence of an unlucky fall from horseback; and my sister followed him, soon after she had brought into the world a lovely boy. The four orphans they had left I could not look at but with sadness. So many healthy people had been called away before poor, sickly me; might I not also have blights to witness among

these fair and hopeful blossoms? I knew the world sufficiently to understand what dangers threaten the precarious breeding of a child, especially a child of quality; and it seemed as if, since the period of my youth, these dangers had increased. I felt that, weakly as I was, I could not be of much, perhaps of any, service to the little ones; and I rejoiced the more on finding that my uncle, as indeed might have been looked for, had determined to devote his whole attention to the education of these amiable creatures. And this they doubtless merited in every sense: they were handsome; and, with great diversities, all promised to be well-conditioned, reasonable persons.

Since my worthy doctor had suggested it, I loved to trace out family likenesses among our relatives and children. My father had carefully preserved the portraits of his ancestors, and got his own and those of his descendants drawn by tolerable masters; nor had my mother and her people been forgotten. We accurately knew the characters of all the family; and, as we had frequently compared them with each other, we now endeavoured to discover in the children the same peculiarities outward or inward. My sister's eldest son, we thought, resembled his paternal grandfather, of whom there was a fine youthful picture in my uncle's collection: he had been a brave soldier; and in this point, too, the boy took after him, liking arms above all things, and busying himself with them whenever he paid me a visit. For my father had left a very pretty armory; and the boy got no rest till I had given him a pair of pistols and a fowling-piece, and he had learned the proper way of using them. At the same time, in his conduct or bearing, there was nothing like rudeness: far from that, he was always meek and sensible.

The eldest daughter had attracted my especial love; of which, perhaps, the reason was, that she resembled me, and of all the four seemed to like me best. But

I may well admit, that, the more closely I observed her as she grew, the more she shamed me: I could not look on her without a sentiment of admiration, nay, I may almost say, of reverence. You would scarcely have seen a nobler form, a more peaceful spirit, an activity so equable and universal. No moment of her life was she unoccupied, and every occupation in her hands became dignified. All seemed indifferent to her, so that she could but accomplish what was proper in the place and time; and, in the same manner, she could patiently continue unemployed, when there was nothing to be done. This activity without need of occupation I have never elsewhere met with. In particular, her conduct to the suffering and destitute was, from her earliest youth, inimitable. For my part, I freely confess I never had the gift to make a business of beneficence: I was not niggardly to the poor; nay, I often gave too largely for my means: yet this was little more than buying myself off: and a person needed to be made for me, if I was to bestow attention on him. Directly the reverse was the conduct of my niece. I never saw her give a poor man money: whatever she obtained from me for this purpose, she failed not in the first place to change for some necessary article. Never did she seem more lovely in my eyes, than when rummaging my clothes-presses: she was always sure to light on something which I did not wear and did not need; to sew these old cast-off articles together, and put them on some ragged child, she thought her highest happiness.

Her sister's turn of mind appeared already different: she had much of her mother; she promised to become very elegant and beautiful, and she now bids fair to keep her promise. She is greatly taken up with her exterior: from her earliest years she could decorate and carry herself in a way that struck you. I still remember with what ecstasy, when quite a little crea-

ture, she saw herself in a mirror, decked in certain precious pearls, once my mother's, which she had by chance discovered, and made me try upon her.

Reflecting on these diverse inclinations, it was pleasant for me to consider how my property would, after my decease, be shared among them, and again called into use. I saw the fowling-pieces of my father once more travelling around the fields on my nephew's shoulder, and birds once more falling from his hunting-pouch: I saw my whole wardrobe issuing from the church, at Easter confirmation, on the persons of tidy little girls; while the best pieces of it were employed to decorate some virtuous burgher maiden on her marriage-day. In furnishing such children and poor little girls, Natalia had a singular delight; though, as I must here remark, she showed not the smallest love, or, if I may say it, smallest need, of a dependence upon any visible or invisible Being, such as I had in my youth so strongly manifested.

When I also thought that the younger sister, on that same day, would wear my jewels and pearls at court, I could see with peace my possessions, like my body, given back to the elements.

The children waxed apace: to my comfort, they are healthy, handsome, clever creatures. That my uncle keeps them from me, I endure without repining: when staying in the neighbourhood, or even in town, they seldom see me.

A singular personage, regarded as a French clergyman, though no one rightly knows his history, has been entrusted with the oversight of all these children. He has them taught in various places: they are put to board now here, now there.

At first I could perceive no plan whatever in this mode of education; till at last our doctor told me the abbé had convinced my uncle, that, in order to accomplish anything by education, we must first become

acquainted with the pupil's tendencies and wishes; that, these once ascertained, he ought to be transported to a situation where he may, as speedily as possible, content the former and attain the latter, and so, if he have been mistaken, may still in time perceive his error, and at last, having found what suits him, may hold the faster by it, may the more diligently fashion himself according to it. I wish this strange experiment may prosper: with such excellent natures it is, perhaps, possible.

But there is one peculiarity in these instructors, which I never shall approve of; they study to exclude the children from whatever might awaken them to an acquaintance with themselves and with the invisible, sole, faithful Friend. I often take it ill of my uncle, that, on this account, he considers me dangerous for the little ones. Thus in practice there is no man tolerant! Many assure us that they willingly leave each to take his own way, yet all endeavour to seclude from action every one that does not think as they do.

This removal of the children troubles me the more, the more I am convinced of the reality of my belief. How can it fail to have a heavenly origin, an actual object, when in practice it is so effectual? Is it not by practice alone that we prove our own existence? Why, then, may we not, by a like mode, prove to ourselves the influence of that Power who gives us all good things?

That I am still advancing, never retrograding; that my conduct is approximating more and more to the image I have formed of perfection; that I every day feel more facility in doing what I reckon proper, even while the weakness of my body so obstructs me, — can all this be accounted for upon the principles of human nature, whose corruption I have so clearly seen into? For me, at least, it cannot.

I scarcely remember a commandment: to me there

is nothing that assumes the aspect of law; it is an impulse that leads me, and guides me always aright. I freely follow my emotions, and know as little of constraint as of repentance. God be praised that I know to whom I am indebted for such happiness, and that I cannot think of it without humility! There is no danger I should ever become proud of what I myself can do or can forbear to do: I have seen too well what a monster might be formed and nursed in every human bosom, did not higher Influence restrain us.

Book VII.

CHAPTER I.

SPRING had come in all its brilliancy; a storm that had been lowering all day went fiercely down upon the hills; the rain drew back into the country; the sun came forth in all its splendour, and upon the dark vapour rose the lordly rainbow. Wilhelm was riding toward it: the sight made him sad. "Ah!" said he within himself, "must it be that the fairest hues of life appear to us only on a ground of black? And must drops fall, if we are to be enraptured? A bright day is like a dull day, if we look at it unmoved; and what can move us but some silent hope that the inborn inclination of our soul shall not always be without an object? The recital of a noble action moves us; the sight of everything harmonious moves us: we feel then as if we were not altogether in a foreign land; we fancy we are nearer the home toward which our best and inmost wishes impatiently strive."

Meanwhile a pedestrian overtook him, and, walking with a stout step by the side of the horse, began to keep him company. After a few common words, he looked at the rider, and said, "If I am not mistaken, I must have already seen you somewhere."

"I, too, remember you," said Wilhelm: "had we not some time ago a pleasant sail together?" "Right!" replied the other.

Wilhelm looked at him more narrowly, then, after a pause, observed, "I do not know what alteration has occurred in you. Last time we met, I took you for a Lutheran country clergyman: you now seem to me more like a Catholic priest."

"To-day, at least, you are not wrong," replied the other, taking off his hat, and showing him the tonsure. "Where is your company gone? Did you stay long with them?"

"Longer than was good: on looking back upon the period which I passed in their society, it seems as if I looked into an endless void; nothing of it has remained with me."

"Here you are mistaken," said the stranger: "everything that happens to us leaves some trace behind it; everything contributes imperceptibly to form us. Yet often it is dangerous to take a strict account of that. For either we grow proud and negligent, or downcast and dispirited; and both are equally injurious in their consequences. The safe plan is, always simply to do the task that lies nearest us; and this in the present case," added he, with a smile, "is to hasten to our quarters."

Wilhelm asked how far Lothario's house was distant: the stranger answered that it lay behind the hill. "Perhaps I shall meet you there," continued he: "I have merely a small affair to manage in the neighbourhood. Farewell till then!" And, with this, he struck into a steep path that seemed to lead more speedily across the hill.

"Yes, the man is right!" said Wilhelm to himself, as he proceeded: "we should think of what is nearest; and for me, at present, there is nothing nearer than the mournful errand I have come to do. Let me see whether I can still repeat the speech, which is to put that cruel man to shame."

He then began reciting to himself this piece of oratory: not a syllable was wanting; and the more his recollection served him, the higher grew his passion and his courage. Aurelia's sorrows and her death were vividly present to his soul.

"Spirit of my friend!" exclaimed he, "hover around

me, and, if thou canst, give some sign to me that thou art softened, art appeased!"

Amid such words and meditations, he had reached the summit of the hill; and, near the foot of its declivity, he now beheld a curious building, which he at once took to be Lothario's dwelling. An old, irregular castle, with several turrets and peaked roofs, appeared to have been the primitive erection; but the new additions to it, placed near the main structure, looked still more irregular. A part of them stood close upon the main edifice: others, at some distance, were combined with it by galleries and covered passages. All external symmetry, every shade of architectural beauty, appeared to have been sacrificed to the convenience of the interior. No trace of wall or trench was to be seen; none of avenues or artificial gardens. A fruit and pot-herb garden reached to the very buildings, and little patches of a like sort showed themselves even in the intermediate spaces. A cheerful village lay at no great distance: the fields and gardens everywhere appeared in the highest state of cultivation.

Sunk in his own impassioned feelings, Wilhelm rode along, not thinking much of what he saw: he put up his horse at an inn, and, not without emotion, hastened to the castle.

An old serving-man received him at the door, and signified, with much good-nature, that to-day it would be difficult to get admission to his lordship, who was occupied in writing letters, and had already refused some people that had business with him. Our friend became more importunate: the old man was at last obliged to yield, and announce him. He returned, and conducted Wilhelm to a spacious, ancient hall; desiring him to be so good as wait, since perhaps it might be some time before his lordship could appear. Our friend walked up and down unrestfully, casting now and then a look at the knights and dames whose

ancient figures hung round him on the walls. He repeated the beginning of his speech: it seemed, in presence of these ruffs and coats of mail, to answer even better. Every time there rose any stir, he put himself in posture to receive his man with dignity; meaning first to hand him the letter, then assail him with the weapons of reproach.

More than once mistaken, he was now beginning to be really vexed and out of tune, when at last a handsome man, in boots and light surtout, stepped in from a side door. "What good news have you for me?" said he to Wilhelm, with a friendly voice: "pardon me, that I have made you wait."

So speaking, he kept folding a letter which he held in his hand. Wilhelm, not without embarrassment, delivered him Aurelia's paper, and replied, "I bring you the last words of a friend, which you will not read without emotion."

Lothario took it, and returned to his chamber with it; where, as Wilhelm through the open door could very easily observe, he addressed and sealed some letters before opening Aurelia's. He appeared to have perused it once or twice; and Wilhelm, though his feelings signified that the pathetic speech would sort but ill with such a cool reception, girded up his mind, went forward to the threshold, and was just about beginning his address, when a tapestry door of the cabinet opened, and the clergyman came in.

"I have got the strangest message you can think of," cried Lothario to him. "Pardon me," continued he, addressing Wilhelm, "if I am not in a mood for speaking further with you at this moment. You remain with us to-night; you, abbé, see the stranger properly attended to."

With these words, he made his guest a bow: the clergyman took Wilhelm by the hand, who followed, not without reluctance.

They walked along some curious passages in silence, and at last reached a very pretty chamber. The abbé led him in, then left him, making no excuses. Erelong an active boy appeared: he introduced himself as Wilhelm's valet, and brought up his supper. In waiting, he had much to say about the order of the house, about their breakfasting and dining, labours and amusements; interspersing many things in commendation of Lothario.

Pleasant as the boy was, Wilhelm endeavoured to get rid of him as soon as possible. He wished to be alone, for he felt exceedingly oppressed and straitened in his new position. He reproached himself with having executed his intention so ill, with having done his errand only half. One moment, he proposed to undertake next morning what he had neglected to-night; the next, he saw, that, by Lothario's presence, he would be attuned to quite a different set of feelings. The house, too, where he was, seemed very strange to him: he could not be at home in his position. Intending to undress, he opened his travelling-bag: with his nightclothes, he took out the Spirit's veil, which Mignon had packed in along with them. The sight of it increased the sadness of his humour. "Flee, youth! flee!" cried he. "What means this mystic word? What am I to flee, or whither? It were better had the Spirit called to me, Return to thyself!" He cast his eyes on some English copper-plates hung round the room in frames; most of them he looked at with indifference: at last he met with one, in which a ship was represented sinking in a tempest; a father, with his lovely daughters, was awaiting death from the intrusive billows. One of the maidens had a kind of likeness to the Amazon: an indescribable compassion seized our friend; he felt an irresistible necessity to vent his feelings; tears filled his eyes, he wept, and did not recover his composure till slumber overpowered him.

Strange dreams arose upon him toward morning. He was in a garden, which in boyhood he had often visited: he looked with pleasure at the well-known alleys, hedges, flower-beds. Mariana met him: he spoke to her with love and tenderness, recollecting nothing of any bygone grievance. Erelong his father joined them, in his week-day dress; with a look of frankness that was rare in him, he bade his son fetch two seats from the garden-house; then took Mariana by the hand, and led her into a grove.

Wilhelm hastened to the garden-house, but found it altogether empty; only at a window in the farther side he saw Aurelia standing. He went forward, and addressed her, but she turned not round; and, though he placed himself beside her, he could never see her face. He looked out from the window: in an unknown garden, there were several people, some of whom he recognised. Frau Melina, seated under a tree, was playing with a rose which she had in her hand: Laertes stood beside her, counting money from the one hand to the other. Mignon and Felix were lying on the grass, the former on her back, the latter on his face. Philina came, and clapped her hands above the children: Mignon lay unmoved; Felix started up and fled. At first he laughed while running, as Philina followed; but he screamed in terror when he saw the harper coming after him with large, slow steps. Felix ran directly to a pond. Wilhelm hastened after him: too late; the child was lying in the water! Wilhelm stood as if rooted to the spot. The fair Amazon appeared on the other side of the pond: she stretched her right hand toward the child, and walked along the shore. The child came through the water, by the course her finger pointed to; he followed her as she went round; at last she reached her hand to him, and pulled him out. Wilhelm had come nearer: the child was all in flames; fiery drops were

falling from his body. Wilhelm's agony was greater than ever; but instantly the Amazon took a white veil from her head, and covered up the child with it. The fire was at once quenched. But, when she lifted up the veil, two boys sprang out from under it, and frolicsomely sported to and fro; while Wilhelm and the Amazon proceeded, hand in hand, across the garden, and noticed in the distance Mariana and his father, walking in an alley, which was formed of lofty trees, and seemed to go quite round the garden. He turned his steps to them, and, with his beautiful attendant, was moving through the garden, when suddenly the fair-haired Friedrich came across their path, and kept them back with loud laughter and a thousand tricks. Still, however, they insisted on proceeding; and Friedrich hastened off, running toward Mariana and the father. These seemed to flee before him; he pursued the faster, till Wilhelm saw them hovering down the alley almost as on wings. Nature and inclination called on him to go and help them, but the hand of the Amazon detained him. How gladly did he let himself be held! With this mingled feeling he awoke, and found his chamber shining with the morning beams.

CHAPTER II.

Our friend was called to breakfast by the boy: he found the abbé waiting in the hall; Lothario, it appeared, had ridden out. The abbé was not very talkative, but rather wore a thoughtful look: he inquired about Aurelia's death, and listened to our friend's recital of it with apparent sympathy. "Ah!" cried he, "the man that discerns, with lively clearness, what infinite operations art and nature must have joined in before a cultivated human being can be formed; the man that himself as much as possible takes interest in the culture of his fellow men, — is ready to despair when he sees how lightly mortals will destroy themselves, will blamelessly or blamably expose themselves to be destroyed. When I think of these things, life itself appears to me so uncertain a gift, that I could praise the man who does not value it beyond its worth."

Scarcely had he spoken, when the door flew violently up: a young lady came rushing in; she pushed away the old servant, who attempted to restrain her. She made right to the abbé, and seized him by the arm: her tears and sobs would hardly let her speak these words: "Where is he? Where have you put him? 'Tis a frightful treachery! Confess it now! I know what you are doing: I will after him, — will know where you have sent him!"

"Be calm, my child," replied the abbé, with assumed composure: "come with me to your room: you shall know it all; only you must have the strength to listen, if you ask me to relate." He offered her his

hand, as if he meant to lead her out. "I will not return to my room," cried she: "I hate the walls where you have kept me prisoner so long. I know it already: the colonel has challenged him; he is gone to meet his enemy: perhaps this very moment he — once or twice I thought I heard the sound of shots! I tell you, order out a coach, and come along with me, or I will fill the house and all the village with my screaming."

Weeping bitterly, she hastened to the window: the abbé held her back, and sought in vain to soothe her.

They heard a sound of wheels: she threw up the window, exclaiming, "He is dead! They are bringing home his body." "He is coming out," replied the abbé: "you perceive he lives." "He is wounded," said she, wildly, "else he would have come on horseback. They are holding him! The wound is dangerous!" She ran to the door, and down the stairs: the abbé hastened after her; and Wilhelm, following, observed the fair one meet her lover, who had now dismounted.

Lothario leaned on his attendant, whom Wilhelm at once knew as his ancient patron, Jarno. The wounded man spoke very tenderly and kindly to the tearful damsel: he rested on her shoulder, and came slowly up the steps, saluted Wilhelm as he passed, and was conducted to his cabinet.

Jarno soon returned, and, going up to Wilhelm, "It appears," said he, "you are predestined everywhere to find a theatre and actors. We have here commenced a play which is not altogether pleasant."

"I rejoice to find you," answered Wilhelm, "in so strange an hour: I am astonished, frightened; and your presence already quiets my mind. Tell me, is there danger? Is the baron badly wounded?"

"I imagine not," said Jarno.

It was not long till the young surgeon entered from

the cabinet. "Now, what say you?" cried Jarno to him. "That it is a dangerous piece of work," replied the other, putting several instruments into his leathern pouch. Wilhelm looked at the band, which was hanging from the pouch: he fancied he knew it. Bright, contrary colours, a curious pattern, gold and silver wrought in singular figures, marked this band from all the bands in the world. Wilhelm was convinced he beheld the very pouch of the ancient surgeon who had dressed his wounds in the green of the forest; and the hope, so long deferred, of again finding traces of the lovely Amazon, struck like a flame through all his soul.

"Where did you get that pouch?" cried he. "To whom did it belong before you? I beg of you, tell me." "I bought it at an auction," said the other: "what is it to me whom it belonged to?" So speaking, he went out; and Jarno said, "If there would come but one word of truth from our young doctor's mouth!" "Then, he did not buy the pouch?" said Wilhelm. "Just as little as Lothario is in danger," said the other.

Wilhelm stood, immersed in many reflections: Jarno asked how he had fared of late. Wilhelm sketched an outline of his history; and when he at last came to speak of Aurelia's death, and his message to the place, his auditor exclaimed, "Well! it is strange! most strange!"

The abbé entered from Lothario's chamber, beckoned Jarno to go in instead of him, and said to Wilhelm, "The baron bids me ask you to remain with us a day or two, to share his hospitality, and, in the present circumstances, contribute to his solacement. If you need to give any notice to your people, your letter shall be instantly despatched. Meanwhile, to make you understand this curious incident, of which you have been witness, I must tell you something, which, indeed, is no secret. The baron had a small adventure with a

lady, which excited more than usual attention; the lady having taken him from a rival, and wishing to enjoy her victory too ostentatiously. After a time he no longer found the same delight in her society; which he, of course, forsook: but, being of a violent temper, she could not bear her fate with patience. Meeting at a ball, they had an open quarrel: she thought herself irreparably injured, and would be revenged. No knight stepped forth to do battle for her; till her husband, whom for years she had not lived with, heard of the affair and took it up. He challenged the baron, and today he has wounded him; yet, as I hear, the gallant colonel has himself come still worse off."

From this hour our friend was treated in the house as if he had belonged to it.

CHAPTER III.

AT times they had read a little to the patient: Wilhelm joyfully performed this service. Lydia stirred not from Lothario's bed: her care for him absorbed her whole attention. But to-day the patient himself seemed occupied with thought: he bade them lay aside their book. "To-day," said he, "I feel through my whole heart how foolishly we let our time pass on. How many things have I proposed to do, how many have I planned; yet how we loiter in our noblest purposes! I have just read over the scheme of the changes which I mean to make in my estates; and it is chiefly, I may say, on their account that I rejoice at the bullet's not having gone a deadlier road."

Lydia looked at him with tenderness, with tears in her eyes; as if to ask if *she*, if his friends, could not pretend to any interest in his wish to live. Jarno answered, "Changes such as you project require to be considered well on every side before they are resolved on."

"Long considerations," said Lothario, "are commonly a proof that we have not the point to be determined clearly in our eye; precipitate proceedings, that we do not know it. I see distinctly, that, in managing my property, there are several particulars in which the services of my dependants cannot be remitted: certain rights which I must rigidly insist on: but I also see that there are other articles, advantageous to me, but by no means indispensable, which might admit of relaxation. Do I not profit by my lands far better than my father did? Is not my income still increas-

ing? And shall I alone enjoy this growing benefit? Shall not those who labour with and for me partake, in their degree, of the advantages which expanding knowledge, which a period of improvement, are procuring for us?"

"'Tis human nature!" cried Jarno: "I do not blame myself when I detect this selfish quality among the rest. Every man desires to gather all things round him, to shape and manage them according to his own pleasure: the money which he himself does not expend, he seldom reckons well expended."

"Certainly," observed Lothario, "much of the capital might be abated if we consumed the interest less capriciously."

"The only thing I shall mention," said the other, "the only reason I can urge against your now proceeding with those alterations, which, for a time at least, must cause you loss, is, that you yourself are still in debt, and that the payment presses hard on you. My advice is, therefore, to postpone your plan till you are altogether free."

"And in the meanwhile leave it at the mercy of a bullet, or the fall of a tile, to annihilate the whole result of my existence and activity! O my friend! it is ever thus: it is ever the besetting fault of cultivated men, that they wish to spend their whole resources on some idea, scarcely any part of them on tangible, existing objects. Why was it that I contracted debts, that I quarrelled with my uncle, that I left my sisters to themselves so long? Purely for the sake of an idea. In America I fancied I might accomplish something; over seas, I hoped to become useful and essential: if any task was not begirt with a thousand dangers, I considered it trivial, unworthy of me. How differently do matters now appear! How precious, how important, seems the duty which is nearest me, whatever it may be!"

"I recollect the letter which you sent me from the Western world," said Jarno: "it contains the words, 'I will return; and in my house, amid my fields, among my people, I will say, *Here or nowhere is America!*'"

"Yes, my friend; and I am still repeating it, and still repining at myself that I am not so busy here as I was there. For certain equable, continuous modes of life, there is nothing more than judgment necessary, and we study to attain nothing more: so that we become unable to discern what extraordinary services each vulgar day requires of us; or, if we do discern them, we find abundance of excuses for not doing them. A judicious man is valuable to himself, but of little value for the general whole."

"We will not," said Jarno, "bear too hard upon judgment: let us grant, that, whenever extraordinary things are done, they are generally foolish."

"Yes! and just because they are not done according to the proper plan. My brother-in-law, you see, is giving up his fortune, so far as in his power, to the Community of Herrnhut: he reckons, that, by doing so, he is advancing the salvation of his soul. Had he sacrificed a small portion of his revenue, he might have rendered many people happy, might have made for them and for himself a heaven upon earth. Our sacrifices are rarely of an active kind: we, as it were, abandon what we give away. It is not from resolution, but despair, that we renounce our property. In these days, I confess it, the image of the count is hovering constantly before me: I have firmly resolved on doing from conviction what a crazy fear is forcing upon him. I will not wait for being cured. Here are the papers: they require only to be properly drawn out. Take the lawyer with you; our guest will help: what I want, you know as well as I; recovering or dying, I will stand by it, and say, *Here or nowhere is Herrnhut!*"

When he mentioned dying, Lydia sank before his

bed: she hung upon his arm, and wept bitterly. The surgeon entered: Jarno gave our friend the papers, and made Lydia leave the room.

"For Heaven's sake! what is this about the count?" cried Wilhelm, when they reached the hall and were alone. "What count is it that means to join the Herrnhuters?"

"One whom you know very well," said Jarno. "You yourself are the ghost who have frightened the unhappy wiseacre into piety: you are the villain who have brought his pretty wife to such a state that she inclines accompanying him."

"And she is Lothario's sister?" cried our friend.

"No other!" "And Lothario knows —"

"The whole!"

"Oh, let me fly!" cried Wilhelm. "How shall I appear before him? What can he say to me?"

"That no man should cast a stone at his brother; that when one composes long speeches, with a view to shame his neighbours, he should speak them to a looking-glass."

"Do you know that too?'

"And many things beside," said Jarno, with a smile. "But in the present case," continued he, "you shall not get away from me so easily as you did last time. You need not now be apprehensive of my bounty-money: I have ceased to be a soldier; when I was one, you might have thought more charitably of me. Since you saw me, many things have altered. My prince, my only friend and benefactor, being dead, I have now withdrawn from busy life and its concerns. I used to have a pleasure in advancing what was reasonable; when I met with any despicable thing, I hesitated not to call it so; and men had never done with talking of my restless head and wicked tongue. The herd of people dread sound understanding more than anything: they ought to dread stupidity, if they had any notion

what was really dreadful. Understanding is unpleasant, they must have it pushed aside; stupidity is but pernicious, they can let it stay. Well, be it so! I need to live: I will by and by communicate my plans to you; if you incline, you shall partake in them. But tell me first how things have gone with you. I see, I feel, that you are changed. How is it with your ancient maggot of producing something beautiful and good in the society of gypsies?"

"Do not speak of it!" cried Wilhelm: "I have been already punished for it. People talk about the stage, but none that has not been upon it can form the smallest notion of it. How utterly these men are unacquainted with themselves, how thoughtlessly they carry on their trade, how boundless their pretensions are, no mortal can conceive. Each would be not only first, but sole; each wishes to exclude the rest, and does not see that even with them he can scarcely accomplish anything. Each thinks himself a man of marvellous originality; yet, with a ravening appetite for novelty, he cannot walk a footstep from the beaten track. How vehemently they counterwork each other! It is only the pitifullest self-love, the narrowest views of interest, that unite them. Of reciprocal accommodation they have no idea: backbiting and hidden spitefulness maintain a constant jealousy among them. In their lives they are either rakes or simpletons. Each claims the loftiest respect, each writhes under the slightest blame. 'All this he knew already,' he will tell you! Why, then, did he not do it? Ever needy, ever unconfiding, they seem as if their greatest fear were reason and good taste; their highest care, to secure the majesty of their self-will."

Wilhelm drew breath, intending to proceed with his eulogium, when an immoderate laugh from Jarno interrupted him. "Poor actors!" cried he; threw himself into a chair, and laughed away. "Poor, dear actors!

Do you know, my friend," continued he, recovering from his fit, "that you have been describing, not the playhouse, but the world; that, out of all ranks, I could find you characters and doings in abundance to suit your cruel pencil? Pardon me: it makes me laugh again, that you should think these amiable qualities existed on the boards alone."

Wilhelm checked his feelings. Jarno's extravagant, untimely laughter had in truth offended him. "It is scarcely hiding your misanthropy," said he, "when you maintain that faults like these are universal."

"And it shows your unacquaintance with the world, when you impute them to the theatre in such a heinous light. I pardon, in the player, every fault that springs from self-deception and the desire to please. If he seem not something to himself and others, he is nothing. To seem is his vocation; he must prize his moment of applause, for he gets no other recompense; he must try to glitter, — he is there to do so."

"You will give me leave at least to smile, in my turn," answered Wilhelm. "I should never have believed that you could be so merciful, so tolerant."

"I swear to you I am serious, fully and deliberately serious. All faults of the man I can pardon in the player: no fault of the player can I pardon in the man. Do not set me upon chanting my lament about the latter: it might have a sharper sound than yours."

The surgeon entered from the cabinet; and, to the question how his patient was, he answered, with a lively air of complaisance, "Extremely well, indeed: I hope soon to see him quite recovered." He hastened through the hall, not waiting Wilhelm's speech, who was preparing to inquire again with greater importunity about the leathern case. His anxiety to gain some tidings of his Amazon inspired him with confidence in Jarno: he disclosed his case to him, and begged his

help. "You that know so many things," said he, "can you not discover this?"

Jarno reflected for a moment; then, turning to his friend, "Be calm," said he, "give no one any hint of it: we shall come upon the fair one's footsteps, never fear. At present I am anxious only for Lothario: the case is dangerous; the kindliness and comfortable talking of the doctor tells me so. We should be quit of Lydia, for here she does no good; but how to set about the task I know not. To-night I am looking for our old physician: we shall then take further counsel."

CHAPTER IV.

THE physician came: it was the good, old, little doctor whom we know already, and to whom we were obliged for the communication of the pious manuscript. First of all, he visited the wounded man, with whose condition he appeared to be by no means satisfied. He had next a long interview with Jarno, but they made no allusion to the subject of it when they came to supper.

Wilhelm saluted him in the kindest manner, and inquired about the harper. "We have still hopes of bringing round the hapless creature," answered the physician. "He formed a dreary item in your limited and singular way of life," said Jarno. "How has it fared with him? Tell me."

Having satisfied Jarno's curiosity, the physician thus proceeded: "I have never seen another man so strangely circumstanced. For many years he has not felt the smallest interest in anything without him, scarcely paid the smallest notice to it: wrapped up in himself, he has looked at nothing but his own hollow, empty Me, which seemed to him like an immeasurable abyss. It was really touching when he spoke to us of this mournful state. 'Before me,' cried he, 'I see nothing; behind me nothing but an endless night, in which I live in the most horrid solitude. There is no feeling in me but the feeling of my guilt; and this appears but like a dim, formless spirit, far before me. Yet here there is no height, no depth, no forwards, no backwards: no words can express this never-changing state. Often in the agony of this sameness I exclaim with

violence, For ever! For ever! and this dark, incomprehensible word is clear and plain to the gloom of my condition. No ray of Divinity illuminates this night: I shed all my tears by myself and for myself. Nothing is more horrible to me than friendship and love, for they alone excite in me the wish that the apparitions which surround me might be real. But these two spectres also have arisen from the abyss to plague me, and at length to tear from me the precious consciousness of my existence, unearthly though it be.'

"You should hear him speak," continued the physician, "when in hours of confidence he thus alleviates his heart. I have listened to him often with the deepest feelings. When pressed by anything, and, as it were, compelled for an instant to confess that a space of time has passed, he looks astounded, then again refers the alteration to the things about him, considering it as an appearance of appearances, and so rejecting the idea of progress in duration. One night he sung a song about his gray hairs: we all sat round him weeping."

"Oh, get it for me!" cried Wilhelm.

"But have you not discovered any trace of what he calls his crime?" inquired Jarno: "nor found out the reason of his wearing such a singular garb; of his conduct at the burning of the house; of his rage against the child?"

"It is only by conjectures that we can approximate to any knowledge of his fate: to question him directly contradicts our principle. Observing easily that he was of the Catholic religion, we thought perhaps confession might afford him some assuagement; but he shrinks away with the strangest gestures every time we try to introduce the priest to him. However, not to leave your curiosity respecting him entirely unsatisfied, I may communicate our suppositions on the subject. In his youth, we think, he must have been a

clergyman: hence probably his wish to keep his beard and long cloak. The joys of love appear to have remained for many years unknown to him. Late in life, as we conceive, some aberration with a lady very nearly related to him; then her death, the consequence of an unlucky creature's birth, — have altogether crazed his brain.

"His chief delusion is a fancy that he brings misfortune everywhere along with him; and that death, to be unwittingly occasioned by a boy, is constantly impending over him. At first he was afraid of Mignon, not knowing that she was a girl; then Felix frightened him; and as, with all his misery, he has a boundless love of life, this may, perhaps, have been the origin of his aversion to the child."

"What hopes have you of his recovery?" inquired our friend.

"It advances slowly," answered the physician, "yet it does advance. He continues his appointed occupations: we have now accustomed him to read the newspapers; he always looks for them with eagerness."

"I am curious about his songs," said Jarno.

"Of these I can engage to get you several," replied the doctor. "Our parson's eldest son, who frequently writes down his father's sermons, has, unnoticed by the harper, marked on paper many stanzas of his singing; out of which some songs have gradually been pieced together."

Next morning Jarno met our friend, and said to him, "We have to ask a kindness of you. Lydia must, for some time, be removed: her violent, unreasonable love and passionateness hinder the baron's recovery. His wound requires rest and calmness, though with his healthy temperament it is not dangerous. You see how Lydia tortures him with her tempestuous anxieties, her ungovernable terrors, her never-drying tears; and — Enough!" he added with a smile, after pausing

for a moment, "our doctor expressly requires that she must quit us for awhile. We have got her to believe that a lady, one of her most intimate friends, is at present in the neighbourhood, wishing and expecting instantly to see her. She has been prevailed upon to undertake a journey to our lawyer's, which is but two leagues off. This man is in the secret: he will wofully lament that Fräulein Theresa should just have left him again; he will seem to think she may still be overtaken. Lydia will hasten after her, and, if you prosper, will be led from place to place. At last, if she insist on turning back, you must not contradict her; but the night will help you: the coachman is a cunning knave, and we shall speak with him before he goes. You are to travel with her in the coach, to talk to her, and manage the adventure."

"It is a strange and dubious commission that you give me," answered Wilhelm. "How painful is the sight of true love injured! And am I to be the instrument of injuring it? I have never cheated any person so; for it has always seemed to me, that if we once begin deceiving, with a view to good and useful purposes, we run the risk of carrying it to excess."

"Yet you cannot manage children otherwise," said Jarno.

"With children it may do," said Wilhelm; "for we love them tenderly, and take an open charge of them. But with our equals, in behalf of whom our heart is not so sure to call upon us for forbearance, it might frequently be dangerous. Yet do not think," he added, after pausing for a moment, "that I purpose to decline the task on this account. Honouring your judgment as I do, feeling such attachment to your noble friend, such eagerness to forward his recovery by whatever means, I willingly forget myself and my opinions. It is not enough that we can risk our life to serve a friend: in the hour of need, we should also yield him

our convictions. Our dearest passions, our best wishes, we are bound to sacrifice in helping him. I undertake the charge; though it is easy to foresee the pain I shall have to suffer, from the tears, from the despair, of Lydia."

"And, for this, no small reward awaits you," answered Jarno: "Fräulein Theresa, whom you get acquainted with, is a lady such as you will rarely see. She puts many a man to shame; I may say, she is a genuine Amazon: while others are but pretty counterfeits, that wander up and down the world in that ambiguous dress."

Wilhelm was struck: he almost fancied that in Theresa he would find his Amazon again; especially as Jarno, whom he importuned to tell him more, broke off abruptly, and went away.

The new, near hope of once more seeing that beloved and honoured being awoke a thousand feelings in his heart. He now looked upon the task which had been given him as the intervention of a special Providence: the thought that he was minded treacherously to carry off a helpless girl from the object of her sincerest, warmest love dwelt but a moment in his mind, as the shadow of a bird flits over the sunshiny earth.

The coach was at the door: Lydia lingered for a moment, as she was about to mount. "Salute your lord again for me," said she to the old servant: "tell him that I shall be home before night." Tears were standing in her eyes as she again looked back when the carriage started. She then turned round to Wilhelm, made an effort to compose herself, and said, "In Fräulein Theresa you will find a very interesting person. I wonder what it is that brings her hither; for, you must know, Lothario and she once passionately loved each other. In spite of the distance, he often used to visit her: I was staying with her then; I thought they would have lived and died for one another. But

all at once it went to wreck, no creature could discover why. He had seen me, and I must confess that I was envious of Theresa's fortune; that I scarcely hid my love from him; that, when he suddenly appeared to choose me in her stead, I could not but accept of him. She behaved to me beyond my wishes, though it almost seemed as if I had robbed her of this precious lover. But, ah! how many thousand tears and pains that love of his has cost me! At first we met only now and then, and by stealth, at some appointed place: but I could not long endure that kind of life; in his presence only was I happy, wholly happy! Far from him, my eyes were never dry, my pulse was never calm. Once he stayed away for several days: I was altogether in despair; I ordered out my carriage, and surprised him here. He received me tenderly; and, had not this unlucky quarrel happened, I should have led a heavenly life with him. But, since the time he began to be in danger and in pain, I shall not say what I have suffered: at this moment I am bitterly reproaching myself that I could leave him for a single day."

Wilhelm was proceeding to inquire about Theresa, when they reached the lawyer's house. This gentleman came forward to the coach, lamenting wofully that Fräulein Theresa was already gone. He invited them to breakfast; signifying, however, that the lady might be overtaken in the nearest village. They determined upon following her: the coachman did not loiter; they had soon passed several villages, and yet come up with nobody. Lydia now gave orders for returning: the coachman drove along, as if he did not understand her. As she insisted with redoubled vehemence, Wilhelm called to him, and gave the promised token. The coachman answered that it was not necessary to go back by the same road: he knew a shorter, and, at the same time, greatly easier one. He turned aside across a wood, and over large commons. At last,

no object they could recognise appearing, he confessed that unfortunately he had lost his way; declaring, at the same time, that he would soon get right again, as he saw a little town before him. Night came on: the coachman managed so discreetly, that he asked everywhere, and nowhere waited for an answer. He drove along all night: Lydia never closed an eye; in the moonshine she was constantly detecting similarities, which as constantly turned out to be dissimilar. In the morning things around seemed known to her, and but more strange on that account. The coach drew up before a neat little country-house: a young lady stepped out, and opened the carriage-door. Lydia looked at her with a stare of wonder, looked round, looked at her again, and fainted in the arms of Wilhelm.

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM was conducted to a little upper room: the house was new, as small nearly as it could be, and extremely orderly and clean. In Theresa, who had welcomed him and Lydia at the coach, he had not found his Amazon: she was another and an altogether different woman. Handsome, and but of middle stature, she moved about with great alertness; and it seemed as if her clear, blue, open eyes let nothing that occurred escape them.

She entered Wilhelm's room, inquiring if he wanted anything. "Pardon me," said she, "for having lodged you in a chamber which the smell of paint still renders disagreeable: my little dwelling is but just made ready; you are handselling this room, which is appointed for my guests. Would that you had come on some more pleasant errand! Poor Lydia is like to be a dull companion: in other points, also, you will have much to pardon. My cook has run away from me, at this unseasonable time; and a serving-man has bruised his hand. The case might happen I had to manage everything myself; and if it were so, why, then we should just put up with it. One is plagued so with nobody as with one's servants: none of them will serve you, scarcely even serve himself."

She said a good deal more on different matters: in general she seemed to like speaking. Wilhelm inquired for Lydia, — if he might not see her, and endeavour to excuse himself.

"It will have no effect at present," said Theresa: "time excuses, as it comforts. Words, in both cases,

are of little effect. Lydia will not see you. 'Keep him from my sight,' she cried, when I was leaving her: 'I could almost despair of human nature. Such an honourable countenance, so frank a manner, and this secret guile!' Lothario she has quite forgiven: in a letter to the poor girl, he declares, 'My friends persuaded me, my friends compelled me!' Among these she reckons you, and she condemns you with the rest."

"She does me too much honour in so blaming me," said Wilhelm: "I have no pretension to the friendship of that noble gentleman; on this occasion, I am but a guiltless instrument. I will not praise what I have done: it is enough that I could do it. It concerned the health, it concerned the life, of a man whom I value more than any one I ever knew before. Oh, what a man is he, Fräulein! and what men are they that live about him! In their society, I for the first time, I may well say, carried on a conversation; for the first time, was the inmost sense of my words returned to me, more rich, more full, more comprehensive, from another's mouth; what I had been groping for was rendered clear to me; what I had been thinking I was taught to see. Unfortunately this enjoyment was disturbed, at first by numerous anxieties and whims, and then by this unpleasant task. I undertook it with submission; for I reckoned it my duty, even though I sacrificed my feelings, to comply with the request of this gifted company of men."

While he spoke, Theresa had been looking at him with a very friendly air. "Oh, how sweet is it to hear one's own opinion uttered by a stranger tongue! We are never properly ourselves until another thinks entirely as we do. My own opinion of Lothario is perfectly the same as yours: it is not every one that does him justice, and therefore all that know him better are enthusiastic in esteem of him. The painful sentiment that mingles with the memory of him in my heart

cannot hinder me from thinking of him daily." A sigh heaved her bosom as she spoke thus, and a lovely tear glittered in her right eye. "Think not," continued she, "that I am so weak, so easy to be moved. It is but the eye that weeps. There was a little wart upon the under eyelid; they have happily removed it, but the eye has been weak ever since; the smallest cause brings a tear into it. Here sat the little wart: you cannot see a vestige of it now."

He saw no vestige, but he saw into her eye; it was clear as crystal: he almost imagined he could see to the very bottom of her soul.

"We have now," said she, "pronounced the watchword of our friendship: let us get entirely acquainted as fast as possible. The history of every person paints his character. I will tell you what my life has been: do you, too, place a little trust in me, and let us be united even when distance parts us. The world is so waste and empty, when we figure only towns and hills and rivers in it; but to know of some one here and there whom we accord with, who is living on with us, even in silence, — this makes our earthly ball a peopled garden."

She hastened off, engaging soon to take him out to walk. Her presence had affected him agreeably: he wished to be informed of her relation to Lothario. He was called: she came to meet him from her room. While they descended, necessarily one by one, the straight and even steepish stairs, she said, "All this might have been larger and grander, had I chosen to accept the offers of your generous friend; but, to continue worthy of him, I must study to retain the qualities which gave me merit in his eyes. Where is the steward?" asked she, stepping from the bottom of the stairs. "You must not think," continued she, "that I am rich enough to need a steward: the few acres of my own little property I myself can manage

well enough. The steward is my new neighbour's, who has bought a fine estate beside us, every point of which I am acquainted with. The good old gentleman is lying ill of gout: his men are strangers here; I willingly assist in settling them."

They took a walk through fields, meadows, and some orchards. Everywhere Theresa kept instructing the steward; nothing so minute but she could give account of it: and Wilhelm had reason to wonder at her knowledge, her precision, the prompt dexterity with which she suggested means for ends. She loitered nowhere, always hastened to the leading-points; and thus her task was quickly over. "Salute your master," said she, as she sent away the man: "I mean to visit him as soon as possible, and wish him a complete recovery. There, now," she added with a smile, as soon as he was gone, "I might soon be rich: my good neighbour, I believe, would not be disinclined to offer me his hand."

"The old man with the gout?" cried Wilhelm: "I know not how, at your years, you could bring yourself to make so desperate a determination." "Nor am I tempted to it!" said Theresa. "Whoever can administer what he possesses has enough; and to be wealthy is a burdensome affair, unless you understand it."

Wilhelm testified his admiration at her skill in husbandry concerns. "Decided inclination, early opportunity, external impulse, and continued occupation in a useful business," said she, "make many things, which were at first far harder, possible in life. When you have learned what causes stimulated me in this pursuit, you will cease to wonder at the talent you now think strange."

On returning home, she sent him to her little garden. Here he could scarcely turn himself, so narrow were the walks, so thickly was it sown and planted. On looking over to the court, he could not help smiling:

the firewood was lying there, as accurately sawed, split, and piled, as if it had been part of the building, and had been intended to continue permanently there. The tubs and implements, all clean, were standing in their places: the house was painted white and red; it was really pleasant to behold. Whatever can be done by handicraft, which knows not beautiful proportions, but labours for convenience, cheerfulness, and durability, appeared united in this spot. They served him up dinner in his own room: he had time enough for meditating. Especially it struck him, that he should have got acquainted with another person of so interesting a character, who had been so closely related to Lothario. "It is just," said he to himself, "that a man so gifted should attract round him gifted women. How far the influence of manliness and dignity extends! Would that others did not come so wofully short, compared with him! Yes, confess thy fear. When thou meetest with thy Amazon, this woman of women, in spite of all thy hopes and dreaming, thou wilt find her, in the end, to thy humiliation and thy shame, — his bride."

CHAPTER VI.

WILHELM had passed a restless afternoon, not altogether without tedium, when toward evening his door opened, and a handsome hunter-boy stepped forward with a bow. "Shall we have a walk?" said the youth; and in the instant Wilhelm recognised Theresa by her lovely eyes.

"Pardon me this masquerade," said she; "for now, alas! it is nothing more. But, as I am going to tell you of the time when I so enjoyed the world, I will recall those days by every method to my fancy. Come along! Even the place where we have rested so often from our hunts and promenades shall help me."

They went accordingly. On their way Theresa said to her attendant, "It is not fair that I alone should speak: you already know enough of me, I nothing about you. Tell me, in the meanwhile, something of yourself, that I may gather courage to submit to you my history and situation." "Alas!" said Wilhelm, "I have nothing to relate but error on the back of error, deviation following deviation; and I know none from whom I would more gladly hide my present and my past embarrassments than from yourself. Your look, the scene you move in, your whole temperament and manner, prove to me that you have reason to rejoice in your bygone life; that you have travelled by a fair, clear path in constant progress; that you have lost no time; that you have nothing to reproach yourself withal."

Theresa answered with a smile, "Let us see if you will think so after you have heard my history." They

walked along: among some general remarks, Theresa asked him, "Are you free?" "I think I am," said he, "and yet I do not wish it." "Good!" said she: "that indicates a complicated story: you also will have something to relate."

Conversing thus, they ascended the hill, and placed themselves beside a lofty oak, which spread its shade far out on every side. "Here," said she, "beneath this German tree, will I disclose to you the history of a German maiden: listen to me patiently.

"My father was a wealthy nobleman of this province, — a cheerful, clear-sighted, active, able man; a tender father, an upright friend, an excellent economist. I knew but one fault in him: he was too compliant to a wife who did not know his worth. Alas that I should have to say so of my mother! Her nature was the opposite of his. She was quick and changeful; without affection either for her home or for me, her only child; extravagant, but beautiful, sprightly, full of talent, the delight of a circle she had gathered round her. Her society, in truth, was never large; nor did it long continue the same. It consisted principally of men, for no woman could like to be near her; still less could *she* endure the merit or the praise of any woman. I resembled my father, both in form and disposition. As the duckling, with its first footsteps, seeks the water; so, from my earliest youth, the kitchen, the storeroom, the granaries, the fields, were my selected element. Cleanliness and order in the house seemed, even while I was playing in it, to be my peculiar instinct, my peculiar object. This tendency gave my father pleasure; and he directed, step by step, my childish endeavour into the suitablest employments. On the contrary, my mother did not like me; and she never for a moment hid it.

"I waxed in stature: with my years increased my turn for occupation, and my father's love to me. When

we were by ourselves, when walking through the fields, when I was helping to examine his accounts, it was then I could see how glad he was. While gazing on his eyes, I felt as if I had been looking in upon myself; for it was in the eyes that I completely resembled him. But, in the presence of my mother, he lost this energy, this aspect: he excused me mildly when she blamed me unjustly and violently; he took my part, not as if he would protect me, but as if he would extenuate the demerit of my good qualities. To none of her caprices did he set himself in opposition. She began to be immensely taken with a passion for the stage: a theatre was soon got up; of men of all shapes and ages, crowding to display themselves along with her upon her boards, she had abundance; of women, on the other hand, there was often a scarcity. Lydia, a pretty girl who had been brought up with me, and who promised from the first to be extremely beautiful, had to undertake the secondary parts; the mothers and the aunts were represented by an ancient chambermaid; while the leading heroines, lovers, and shepherdesses of every kind were seized on by my mother. I cannot tell you how ridiculous it seemed to me to see the people, every one of whom I knew full well, standing on their scaffold, and pretending, after they had dressed themselves in other clothes, to pass for something else than what they were. In my eyes they were never anything but Lydia and my mother, this baron and that secretary, whether they appeared as counts and princes, or as peasants; and I could not understand how they meant to make me think that they were sad or happy, that they were indifferent or in love, liberal or avaricious, when I well knew the contrary to be the case. Accordingly I very seldom stayed among the audience: I always snuffed their candles, that I might not be entirely without employment; I prepared the supper; and next morn-

ing, before they rose, I used to have their wardrobe all sorted, which commonly, the night before, they had left in a chaotic state.

"To my mother this activity appeared quite proper, but her love I could not gain. She despised me; and I know for certain that she more than once exclaimed with bitterness, 'If the mother could be as uncertain as the father, you would scarcely take this housemaid for my daughter!' Such treatment, I confess, at length entirely estranged me from her: I viewed her conduct as the conduct of a person unconnected with me; and, being used to watch our servants like a falcon (for this, be it said in passing, is the ground of all true housekeeping), the proceedings of my mother and her friends at the same time naturally forced themselves upon my observation. It was easy to perceive that she did not look on all men alike; I gave sharper heed, and soon found out that Lydia was her confidant, and had herself, by this opportunity, become acquainted with a passion, which, from her earliest youth, she had so often represented. I was aware of all their meetings; but I held my tongue, hinting nothing to my father, whom I was afraid of troubling. At last, however, I was obliged to speak. Many of their enterprises could not be accomplished without corrupting the servants. These now began to grow refractory: they despised my father's regulations, disregarded my commands. The disorders which arose from this I could not tolerate: I discovered all, complained of all to my father.

"He listened to me calmly. 'Good girl!' replied he with a smile; 'I know it all: be quiet, bear it patiently; for it is on thy account alone that I endure it.'

"I was not quiet: I had not patience. I in secret blamed my father, for I did not think that any reason should induce him to endure such things. I called for

regularity from all the servants: I was bent on driving matters to extremity.

"My mother had been rich before her marriage, yet she squandered more than she had a right to; and this, as I observed, occasioned many conferences between my parents. For a long time the evil was not helped, till at last the passions of my mother brought it to a head.

"Her first gallant became unfaithful in a glaring manner: the house, the neighbourhood, her whole condition, grew offensive to her. She insisted on removing to a different estate; there she was too solitary; she insisted on removing to the town; there she felt herself eclipsed among the crowd. Of much that passed between my father and her I know nothing: however, he at last determined, under stipulations which I did not learn, to consent that she should take a journey, which she had been meditating, to the south of France.

"We were now free; we lived as if in heaven: I do believe my father could not be a loser, had he purchased her absence by a considerable sum. All our useless domestics were dismissed, and fortune seemed to smile on our undertakings; we had some extremely prosperous years; all things succeeded to our wish. But, alas! this pleasing state was not of long continuance: altogether unexpectedly my father had a shock of palsy; it lamed his right side, and deprived him of the proper use of speech. We had to guess at everything that he required, for he never could pronounce the word that he intended. There were times when this was dreadfully afflicting to us: he would require expressly to be left alone with me; with earnest gestures, he would signify that every one should go away; and, when we saw ourselves alone, he could not speak the word he meant. His impatience mounted to the highest pitch: his situation

touched me to the inmost heart. Thus much seemed certain: he had something which he wished to tell me, which especially concerned my interest. What longing did I feel to know it! At other times I could discover all things in his eyes, but now it was in vain. Even his eyes no longer spoke. Only this was clear: he wanted nothing, he desired nothing; he was striving to discover something to me, which unhappily I did not learn. His malady revisited him: he grew entirely inactive, incapable of motion; and a short time afterward he died.

"I know not how it had got rooted in my thoughts, that somewhere he had hid a treasure which he wished at death to leave me rather than my mother; I searched about for traces of it while he lived, but I could meet with none: at his death a seal was put on everything. I wrote to my mother, offering to continue in the house, and manage for her: she refused, and I was obliged to leave the place. A mutual testament was now produced: it gave my mother the possession and the use of all; and I was left, at least throughout her life, dependent on her. It was now that I conceived I rightly understood my father's beckonings: I pitied him for having been so weak; he had let himself be forced to do unjustly to me even after he was dead. Certain of my friends maintained that it was little better than if he had disinherited me: they called upon me to attack the will by law, but this I never could resolve on doing. I reverenced my father's memory too much: I trusted in destiny; I trusted in myself.

"There was a lady in the neighbourhood possessed of large property, with whom I had always been on good terms: she gladly received me; I engaged to superintend her household, and erelong the task grew very easy to me. She lived regularly, she loved order in everything; and I faithfully assisted her in strug-

gling with her steward and domestics. I am neither of a niggardly nor grudging temper; but we women are disposed to insist, more earnestly than men, that nothing shall be wasted. Embezzlement of all sorts is intolerable to us; we require that each enjoy exactly in so far as right entitles him.

"Here I was in my element once more: I mourned my father's death in silence. My protectress was content with me: one small circumstance alone disturbed my peace. Lydia returned: my mother had been harsh enough to cast the poor girl off, after having altogether spoiled her. Lydia had learned with her mistress to consider passions as her occupation: she was wont to curb herself in nothing. On her unexpected reappearance, the lady whom I lived with took her in: she wished to help me, but could train herself to nothing.

"About this time the relatives and future heirs of my protectress often visited the house, to recreate themselves with hunting. Lothario was frequently among them: it was not long till I had noticed, though without the smallest reference to myself, how far he was superior to the rest. He was courteous toward all, and Lydia seemed erelong to have attracted his attention to her. Constantly engaged in something, I was seldom with the company: while he was there I did not talk so much as usual; for, I will confess it, lively conversation, from of old, had been to me the finest season of existence. With my father I was wont to talk of everything that happened. What you do not speak of, you will seldom accurately think of. No man had I ever heard with greater pleasure than I did Lothario, when he told us of his travels and campaigns. The world appeared to lie before him clear and open, as to me the district was in which I lived and managed. We were not entertained with marvellous personal adventures, the extravagant

half-truths of a shallow traveller, who is always painting out himself, and not the country he has undertaken to describe. Lothario did not tell us his adventures: he led us to the place itself. I have seldom felt so pure a satisfaction.

"But still higher was my pleasure when I heard him talk, one evening, about women. The subject happened to be introduced: some ladies of the neighbourhood had come to see us, and were speaking, in the common style, about the cultivation of the female mind. Our sex, they said, was treated unjustly: every sort of higher education men insisted on retaining for themselves; they admitted us to no science, they required us either to be dolls or family drudges. To all this Lothario said not much; but, when the party was a little thinned, he gave us his opinion more explicitly. 'It is very strange,' cried he, 'that men are blamed for their proceedings here; they have placed woman on the highest station she is capable of occupying. And where is there any station higher than the ordering of the house? While the husband has to vex himself with outward matters, while he has wealth to gather and secure, while perhaps he takes part in the administration of the state, and everywhere depends on circumstances; ruling nothing, I may say, while he conceives that he is ruling much; compelled to be but politic where he would willingly be reasonable, to dissemble where he would be open, to be false where he would be upright; while thus, for the sake of an object which he never reaches, he must every moment sacrifice the first of objects, harmony with himself,—a reasonable housewife is actually governing in the interior of her family; has the comfort and activity of every person in it to provide for, and make possible. What is the highest happiness of mortals, if not to execute what we consider right and good,—to be really masters of the means conducive to our

aims? And where should or can our nearest aims be, but in the interior of our home? All those indispensable and still to be renewed supplies, where do we expect, do we require, to find them, if not in the place where we rise and where we go to sleep, where kitchen and cellar, and every species of accommodation for ourselves and ours, is to be always ready? What unvarying activity is needed to conduct this constantly recurring series in unbroken living order! How few are the men to whom it is given to return regularly like a star, to command their day as they command their night; to form for themselves their household instruments, to sow and to reap, to gain and to expand, and to travel round their circle with perpetual success and peace and love! It is when a woman has attained this inward mastery, that she truly makes the husband whom she loves, a master: her attention will acquire all sorts of knowledge; her activity will turn them all to profit. Thus is she dependent upon no one; and she procures her husband genuine independence, that which is interior and domestic: whatever he possesses, he beholds secured: what he earns, well employed: and thus he can direct his mind to lofty objects; and, if fortune favours, he may act in the state the same character which so well becomes his wife at home.'

"He then described to us the kind of wife he wished. I reddened; for he was describing me, as I looked and lived. I silently enjoyed my triumph; and the more, as I perceived, from all the circumstances, that he had not meant me individually, that, indeed, he did not know me. I cannot recollect a more delightful feeling in my life than this, when a man whom I so highly valued gave the preference, not to my person, but to my inmost nature. What a recompense did I consider it! What encouragement did it afford me!

"So soon as they were gone, my worthy benefactress with a smile observed to me, 'Pity that men often think and speak of what they will never execute, else here were a special match, the exact thing for my dear Theresa!' I made sport of her remark, and added, that indeed men's understanding gave its vote for household wives, but that their heart and imagination longed for other qualities; and that we household people could not stand a rivalry with beautiful and lovely women. This was spoken for the ear of Lydia; she did not hide from us that Lothario had made a deep impression on her heart: and, in reality, he seemed at each new visit to grow more and more attentive to her. She was poor, and not of rank; she could not think of marriage; but she was unable to resist the dear delight of charming and of being charmed. I had never loved, nor did I love at present; but though it was unspeakably agreeable to see in what light my turn of mind was viewed, how high it was ranked by such a man, I will confess I still was not altogether satisfied. I now wished that he should be acquainted with me, and should take a personal interest in me. This wish arose, without the smallest settled thought of anything that could result from it.

"The greatest service I did my benefactress was in bringing into order the extensive forests which belonged to her. In this precious property, whose value time and circumstances were continually increasing, matters still went on according to the old routine,—without regularity, without plan, no end to theft and fraud. Many hills were standing bare: an equal growth was nowhere to be found but in the oldest cuttings. I personally visited the whole of them, with an experienced forester. I got the woods correctly measured: I set men to hew, to sow, to plant; in a short time, all things were in progress. That I might mount more readily on horseback, and also walk on foot with less

obstruction, I had a suit of men's clothes made for me: I was present in many places, I was feared in all.

"Hearing that our young friends, with Lothario, were purposing to have another hunt, it came into my head, for the first time in my life, to make a figure, or, that I may not do myself injustice, to pass in the eyes of this noble gentleman for what I was. I put on my men's clothes, took my gun upon my shoulder, and went forward with our hunters, to await the party on our marches. They came: Lothario did not know me; a nephew of the lady introduced me to him as a clever forester, joked about my youth, and carried on his jesting in my praise, till at last Lothario recognised me. The nephew seconded my project, as if we had concocted it together. He circumstantially and gratefully described what I had done for the estates of his aunt, and consequently for himself

"Lothario listened with attention: he talked with me, inquired concerning all particulars of the estates and district. I, of course, was glad to have such an opportunity of showing him my knowledge: I stood my ordeal very well; I submitted certain projects of improvement to him, which he sanctioned, telling me of similar examples, and strengthening my arguments by the connection which he gave them. My satisfaction grew more perfect every moment. Happily, however, I merely wished that he should be acquainted with me, not that he should love me. We came home; and I observed, more clearly than before, that the attention he showed Lydia seemed expressive of a secret attachment. I had reached my object, yet I was not at rest; from that day he showed a true respect for me, a fine trust in me; in company he usually spoke to me, asked my opinion, and appeared to be persuaded, that, in household matters, nothing was unknown to me. His sympathy excited me extremely: even when the conversation was of general

finance and political economy, he used to lead me to take part in it; and, in his absence, I endeavoured to acquire more knowledge of our province, nay, of all the empire. The task was easy for me: it was but repeating on the great scale what I knew so accurately on the small.

"From this period he visited our house oftener. We talked, I may say, of everything; yet in some degree our conversation always in the end grew economical, if even but in a secondary sense. What immense effects a man, by the continuous application of his powers, his time, his money, even by means which seem but small, may bring about, was frequently and largely spoken of.

"I did not withstand the tendency which drew me toward him; and, alas! I felt too soon how deep, how cordial, how pure and genuine, was my love, as I believed it more and more apparent that Lydia, and not myself, was the occasion of these visits. She, at least, was most vividly persuaded so: she made me her confidant; and this, again, in some degree, consoled me. For, in truth, what she explained so much to her advantage, I reckoned nowise of importance: there was not a trace of any serious lasting union being meditated, but the more distinctly did I see the wish of the impassioned girl to be his at any price.

"Thus did matters stand, when the lady of the house surprised me with an unexpected message. 'Lothario,' said she, 'offers you his hand, and desires through life to have you ever at his side.' She enlarged upon my qualities, and told me, what I liked sufficiently to hear, that in me Lothario was persuaded he had found the person whom he had so long been seeking for.

"The height of happiness was now attained for me: my hand was asked by a man for whom I had the greatest value, beside whom, and along with whom, I

might expect a full, expanded, free, and profitable employment of my inborn tendency, of my talent perfected by practice. The sum of my existence seemed to have enlarged itself into infinitude. I gave my consent: he himself came, and spoke with me in private; he held out his hand to me; he looked into my eyes, he clasped me in his arms, and pressed a kiss upon my lips. It was the first and the last. He confided to me all his circumstances; told me how much his American campaign had cost him, what debts he had accumulated on his property; that, on this score, he had in some measure quarrelled with his grand-uncle; that the worthy gentleman intended to relieve him, though truly in his own peculiar way, being minded to provide him with a rich wife, whereas, a man of sense would choose a household wife, at all events; that, however, by his sister's influence, he hoped his noble relative would be persuaded. He set before me the condition of his fortune, his plans, his prospects, and requested my coöperation. Till his uncle should consent, our promise was to be a secret.

"Scarcely was he gone when Lydia asked me whether he had spoken of her. I answered no, and tired her with a long detail of economical affairs. She was restless, out of humour; and his conduct, when he came again, did not improve her situation.

"But the sun, I see, is bending to the place of rest. Well for you, my friend! You would otherwise have had to hear this story, which I often enough go over by myself, in all its most minute particulars. Let me hasten: we are coming to an epoch on which it is not good to linger.

"By Lothario I was made acquainted with his noble sister; and she, at a convenient time, contrived to introduce me to the uncle. I gained the old man: he consented to our wishes, and I returned with happy tidings to my benefactress. The affair was now no

secret in the house: Lydia heard of it; she thought the thing impossible. When she could no longer doubt of it, she vanished all at once: we knew not whither she had gone.

"Our marriage day was coming near: I had often asked him for his portrait; just as he was going off, I reminded him that he had promised it. He said, 'You have never given me the case you want to have it fitted into.' This was true: I had got a present from a female friend, on which I set no ordinary value. Her name, worked from her own hair, was fastened on the outer glass: within, there was a vacant piece of ivory, on which her portrait was to have been painted, when a sudden death snatched her from me. Lothario's love had cheered me at the time her death lay heavy on my spirits, and I wished to have the void which she had left me in her present filled by the picture of my friend.

"I ran to my chamber, fetched my jewel-box, and opened it in his presence. Scarcely had he looked into it, when he noticed a medallion with a portrait of a lady. He took it in his hand, considered it attentively, and asked me hastily whose face it was. 'My mother's,' answered I. 'I could have sworn,' said he, 'that it was the portrait of a Madame Saint Alban whom I met some years ago in Switzerland.' 'It is the same,' replied I, smiling, 'and so you have unwittingly become acquainted with your stepmother. Saint Alban is the name my mother has assumed for travelling with: she passes under it in France at present.'

"'I am the miserablest man alive!' exclaimed he, as he threw the portrait back into the box, covered his eyes with his hand, and hurried from the room. He sprang on horseback: I ran to the balcony, and called out after him; he turned, waved his hand to me, went speedily away, — and I have never seen him more."

The sun went down: Theresa gazed with unaverted looks upon the splendour, and both her fine eyes filled with tears.

Theresa spoke not: she laid her hand upon her new friend's hands; he kissed it with emotion: she dried her tears, and rose. "Let us return, and see that all is right," said she.

The conversation was not lively by the way. They entered the garden-door, and noticed Lydia sitting on a bench: she rose, withdrew before them, and walked in. She had a paper in her hand: two little girls were by her. "I see," observed Theresa, "she is still carrying her only comfort, Lothario's letter, with her. He promises that she shall live with him again so soon as he is well: he begs of her till then to stay in peace with me. On these words she hangs, with these lines she solaces herself; but with his friends she is extremely angry."

Meanwhile the two children had approached. They courtesied to Theresa, and gave her an account of all that had occurred while she was absent. "You see here another part of my employment," said Theresa. "Lothario's sister and I have made a league: we educate some little ones in common; such as promise to be lively, serviceable housewives I take charge of, she of such as show a finer and more quiet talent: it is right to provide for the happiness of future husbands, both in household and in intellectual matters. When you become acquainted with my noble friend, a new era in your life will open. Her beauty, her goodness, make her worthy of the reverence of the world." Wilhelm did not venture to confess, that unhappily the lovely countess was already known to him; that his transient connection with her would occasion him perpetual sorrow. He was well pleased that Theresa let the conversation drop, that some business called for her within. He was now alone: the intelligence which he

had just received of the young and lovely countess being driven to replace, by deeds of benevolence, her own lost comfort, made him very sad; he felt, that, with her, it was but a need of self-oblivion, an attempt to supply, by the hopes of happiness to others, the want of a cheerful enjoyment of existence in herself. He thought Theresa happy, since, even in that unexpected melancholy alteration which had taken place in her prospects, there was no alteration needed in herself. "How fortunate beyond all others," cried he, "is the man, who, in order to adjust himself to fate, is not required to cast away his whole preceding life!"

Theresa came into his room, and begged pardon for disturbing him. "My whole library," said she, "is in the wall-press here: they are rather books which I do not throw aside, than which I have taken up. Lydia wants a pious book: there are one or two of that sort among them. Persons who throughout the whole twelve months are worldly, think it necessary to be godly at a time of straits: all moral and religious matters they regard as physic, which is to be taken with aversion when they are unwell; in a clergyman, a moralist, they see nothing but a doctor, whom they cannot soon enough get rid of. Now, I confess, I look upon religion as a kind of diet, which can only be so when I make a constant practice of it, when throughout the whole twelve months I never lose it out of sight."

She searched among the books: she found some edifying works, as they are called. "It was of my mother," said Theresa, "that poor Lydia learned to have recourse to books like these. While her gallant continued faithful, plays and novels were her life: his departure brought religious writings once more into credit. I, for my share, cannot understand," continued she, "how men have made themselves believe that

God speaks to us through books and histories. The man to whom the universe does not reveal directly what relation it has to him, whose heart does not tell him what he owes to himself and others, that man will scarcely learn it out of books, which generally do little more than give our errors names."

She left our friend alone: he passed his evening in examining the little library; it had, in truth, been gathered quite at random.

Theresa, for the few days Wilhelm spent with her, continued still the same: she related to him at different times the consequence of that singular incident with great minuteness. Day and hour, place and name, were present to her memory: we shall here compress into a word or two so much of it as will be necessary for the information of our readers.

The reason of Lothario's quick departure was, unhappily, too easy to explain. He had met Theresa's mother on her journey: her charms attracted him; she was no niggard of them; and this luckless transitory aberration came at length to shut him out from being united to a lady whom nature seemed to have expressly made for him. As for Theresa, she continued in the pure circle of her duties. They learned that Lydia had been living in the neighbourhood in secret. She was happy that the marriage, though for unknown causes, had not been completed. She endeavoured to renew her intimacy with Lothario; and more, as it seemed, out of desperation than affection, by surprise than with consideration, from tedium than of purpose, he had met her wishes.

Theresa was not uneasy on this account; she waived all further claims; and, if he had even been her husband, she would probably have had sufficient spirit to endure a matter of this kind, if it had not troubled her domestic order: at least, she often used to say, that a wife who properly conducted her economy should take

no umbrage at such little fancies of her husband, but be always certain that he would return.

Erelong Theresa's mother had deranged her fortune: the losses fell upon the daughter, whose share of the effects, in consequence, was small. The old lady, who had been Theresa's benefactress, died, leaving her a little property in land, and a handsome sum by way of legacy. Theresa soon contrived to make herself at home in this new, narrow circle. Lothario offered her a better property, Jarno endeavouring to negotiate the business; but she refused it. "I will show," said she, "in this little, that I deserved to share the great with him; but I keep this before me, that, should accident embarrass me, on my own account or that of others, I will betake myself without the smallest hesitation to my generous friend."

There is nothing less liable to be concealed and unemployed than well-directed practical activity. Scarcely had she settled in her little property, when her acquaintance and advice began to be desired by many of her neighbours; and the proprietor of the adjacent lands gave her plainly enough to understand that it depended on herself alone whether she would take his hand, and be heiress of the greater part of his estates. She had already mentioned the matter to our friend: she often jested with him about marriages, suitable and unsuitable.

"Nothing," said she once, "gives a greater loose to people's tongues than when a marriage happens which they can denominate unsuitable: and yet the unsuitable are far more common than the suitable; for, alas! with most marriages, it is not long till things assume a very piteous look. The confusion of ranks by marriage can be called unsuitable only when the one party is unable to participate in the manner of existence which is native, habitual, and which at length grows absolutely necessary, to the other. The different classes

have different ways of living, which they cannot change or communicate to one another; and this is the reason why connections such as these, in general, were better not be formed. Yet exceptions, and exceptions of the happiest kind, are possible. Thus, too, the marriage of a young woman with a man advanced in life is generally unsuitable; yet I have seen some such turn out extremely well. For me, I know but of one kind of marriage that would be entirely unsuitable,— that in which I should be called upon to make a show, and manage ceremonies: I would rather give my hand to the son of any honest farmer in the neighbourhood."

Wilhelm at length made ready for returning. He requested of Theresa to obtain for him a parting word with Lydia. The impassioned girl at last consented: he said some kindly things to her, to which she answered, "The first burst of anguish I have conquered. Lothario will be ever dear to me: but for those friends of his, I know them; and it grieves me that they are about him. The abbé, for a whim's sake, could leave a person in extreme need, or even plunge one into it; the doctor would have all things go on like clockwork; Jarno has no heart; and you — at least no force of character! Just go on: let these three people use you as their tool; they will have many an execution to commit to you. For a long time, as I know well, my presence has been hateful to them. I had not found out their secret, but I had observed that they had one. Why these bolted rooms, these strange passages? Why can no one ever reach the central tower? Why did they banish me, whenever they could, to my own chamber? I will confess, jealousy at first incited me to these discoveries: I feared some lucky rival might be hid there. I have now laid aside that suspicion: I am well convinced that Lothario loves me, that he means honourably by me; but I am quite as well convinced that his false and artful friends betray him. If

you would really do him service, if you would ever be forgiven for the injury which I have suffered from you, free him from the hands of these men. But what am I expecting! Give this letter to him; repeat what it contains, — that I will love him for ever, that I depend upon his word. Ah!" cried she, rising, and throwing herself with tears upon Theresa's neck: "he is surrounded by my foes; they will endeavour to persuade him that I have sacrificed nothing for his sake. Oh! Lothario may well believe that he is worthy of any sacrifice, without needing to be grateful for it."

Wilhelm's parting with Theresa was more cheerful: she wished they might soon meet again. "Me you wholly know," said she: "I alone have talked while we have been together. It will be your duty, next time, to repay my candour."

During his return he kept contemplating this new and bright phenomenon with the liveliest recollection. What confidence had she inspired him with. He thought of Mignon and Felix, and how happy they might be if under her direction; then he thought of himself, and felt what pleasure it would be to live beside a being so entirely serene and clear. As he approached Lothario's castle, he observed, with more than usual interest, the central tower and the many passages and side-buildings: he resolved to question Jarno or the abbé on the subject, by the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER VII.

On arriving at the castle, Wilhelm found its noble owner in the way of full recovery: the doctor and the abbé had gone off; Jarno alone was there. It was not long till the patient now and then could ride, sometimes by himself, sometimes with his friends. His conversation was at once courteous and earnest, instructive and enlivening: you could often notice in it traces of a tender sensibility; although he strove to hide it, and almost seemed to blame it, when, in spite of him, it came to view.

One evening while at table he was silent, though his look was very cheerful.

"To-day," said Jarno, "you have met with an adventure; and, no doubt, you relished it."

"I give you credit for your penetration," said Lothario. "Yes, I have met with a very pleasing adventure. At another time, perhaps, I should not have considered it so charming as to-day, when it came upon me so attractively. Toward night I rode out beyond the river, through the hamlets, by a path which I had often visited in former years. My bodily ailings must have reduced me more than I supposed: I felt weak; but, as my strength was re-awakening, I was, as it were, new-born. All objects seemed to wear the hues they had in earlier times: all looked graceful, lovely, charming, as they have not looked to me for many years. I easily observed that it was mere debility, yet I continued to enjoy it: I rode softly onward, and could now conceive how men may grow to like diseases which attune us to those sweet emotions. You

know, perhaps, what used of old so frequently to lead me that way?"

"If I mistake not," answered Jarno, "it was a little love-concern you were engaged in with a farmer's daughter."

"It might be called a great one," said Lothario; "for we loved each other deeply, seriously, and for a long time. To-day, it happened, everything combined to represent before me in its liveliest colour the earliest season of our love. The boys were again shaking may-bugs from the trees: the ashen grove had not grown larger since the day I saw her first. It was now long since I had met with Margaret. She is married at a distance; and I had heard by chance that she was come with her children, some weeks ago, to pay a visit to her father."

"This ride, then, was not altogether accidental?"

"I will not deny," replied Lothario, "that I wished to meet her. On coming near the house, I saw her father sitting at the door: a child of probably a year old was standing by him. As I approached, a female gave a hasty look from an upper window; and a minute afterward I heard some person tripping down-stairs. I thought surely it was she; and, I will confess, I was flattering myself that she had recognised me, and was hastening to meet me. But what was my surprise and disappointment, when she bounded from the door, seized the child, to whom the horses had come pretty close, and took it in! It gave me a painful twinge: my vanity, however, was a little solaced when I thought I saw a tint of redness on her neck and on the ear, which were uncovered.

"I drew up, and, while speaking with the father, glanced sideways over all the windows, to observe if she would not appear at some of them; but no trace of her was visible. Ask I would not, so I rode away. My displeasure was a little mollified by wonder;

though I had not seen the face, it appeared to me that she was scarcely changed; and ten years are a pretty space! Nay, she looked even younger, quite as slim, as light of foot; her neck, if possible, was lovelier than before; her cheeks as quick at blushing; yet she was the mother of six children, perhaps of more. This apparition suited the enchantment which surrounded me so well, that I rode along with feelings grown still younger; and I did not turn till I was at the forest, when the sun was going down. Strongly as the falling dew and the prescription of our doctor called upon me to proceed direct homewards, I could not help again going round by the farmhouse. I observed a woman walking up and down the garden, which is fenced by a light hedge. I rode along the footpath to it, and found myself at no great distance from the person whom I wanted.

"Though the evening sun was glancing in my eyes, I saw that she was busy with the hedge, which only slightly covered her. I thought I recognised my mistress. On coming up, I halted, not without a palpitation at the heart. Some high twigs of wild roses, which a soft air was blowing to and fro, made her figure indistinct to me. I spoke to her, asked her how she was. She answered, in an undertone, 'Quite well.' In the meantime I perceived a child behind the hedge, engaged in plucking roses; and I took the opportunity of asking where her other children were. 'It is not my child,' said she: 'that were rather early!' And at this moment it happened that the twigs were blown aside, and her face could be distinctly seen. I knew not what to make of the affair. It was my mistress, and it was not. Almost younger, almost lovelier, than she used to be ten years before. 'Are not you the farmer's daughter?' inquired I, half confused. 'No,' said she: 'I am her cousin.'

"'You resemble one another wonderfully,' added I.

"'Yes, so says every one that knew her half a score of years ago.'

"I continued putting various questions to her: my mistake was pleasant to me, even after I had found it out. I could not leave this living image of bygone blessedness that stood before me. The child, meanwhile, had gone away: it had wandered to the pond in search of flowers. She took her leave, and hastened after it.

"I had now, however, learned that my former love was really in her father's house. While riding forward, I employed myself in guessing whether it had been her cousin or she that had secured the child from harm. I more than once, in thought, repeated all the circumstances of the incident: I can remember few things that have affected me more gratefully. But I feel that I am still unwell: we must ask the doctor to deliver us from the remains of this pathetic humour."

With confidential narratives of pretty love adventures, it often happens as with ghost stories: when the first is told, the others follow of themselves.

Our little party, in recalling other times, found numerous passages of this description. Lothario had the most to tell. Jarno's histories were all of one peculiar character: what Wilhelm could disclose we already know. He was apprehensive they might mention his adventure with the countess; but it was not hinted at, not even in the remotest manner.

"It is true," observed Lothario, "there can scarcely any feeling in the world be more agreeable than when the heart, after a pause of indifference, again opens to love for some new object; yet I would for ever have renounced that happiness, had fate been pleased to unite me with Theresa. We are not always youths: we ought not always to be children. To the man who knows the world, who understands what he should do in it, what he should hope from it, nothing can be

more desirable than meeting with a wife who will everywhere coöperate with him, who will everywhere prepare his way for him; whose diligence takes up what his must leave; whose occupation spreads itself on every side, while his must travel forward on its single path. What a heaven had I figured for myself beside Theresa! Not the heaven of an enthusiastic bliss, but of a sure life on earth; order in prosperity, courage in adversity, care for the smallest, and a spirit capable of comprehending and managing the greatest. Oh! I saw in her the qualities which, when developed, make such women as we find in history, whose excellence appears to us far preferable to that of men, — this clearness of view, this expertness in all emergencies, this sureness in details, which brings the whole so accurately out, although they never seem to think of it. You may well forgive me," added he, and turning to Wilhelm, with a smile, "that I forsook Aurelia for Theresa: with the one I could expect a calm and cheerful life, with the other not a happy hour."

"I will confess," said Wilhelm, "that, in coming hither, I had no small anger in my heart against you; that I proposed to censure with severity your conduct to Aurelia."

"It was really censurable," said Lothario: "I should not have exchanged my friendship for her with the sentiment of love; I should not, in place of the respect which she deserved, have intruded an attachment she was neither calculated to excite nor to maintain. Alas! she was not lovely when she loved, — the greatest misery that can befall a woman."

"Well, it is past!" said Wilhelm. "We cannot always shun the things we blame; in spite of us, our feelings and our actions sometimes strangely swerve from their natural and right direction; yet there are certain duties which we never should lose sight of. Peace be to the ashes of our friend! Without censur-

know, perhaps, what used of old so frequently to lead me that way?"

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"I will not deny," replied Lothario, "that I wished to meet her. On coming near the house, I saw her father sitting at the door: a child of probably a year old was standing by him. As I approached, a female gave a hasty look from an upper window; and a minute afterward I heard some person tripping down-stairs. I thought surely it was she; and, I will confess, I was flattering myself that she had recognised me, and was hastening to meet me. But what was my surprise and disappointment, when she bounded from the door, seized the child, to whom the horses had come pretty close, and took it in! It gave me a painful twinge: my vanity, however, was a little solaced when I thought I saw a tint of redness on her neck and on the ear, which were uncovered.

"I drew up, and, while speaking with the father, glanced sideways over all the windows, to observe if she would not appear at some of them; but no trace of her was visible. Ask I would not, so I rode away. My displeasure was a little mollified by wonder;

"We shall soon arrange it," said Lothario. "The little girl may be committed to Theresa: she cannot be in better hands. As for the boy, I think you should yourself take charge of him: what in us the women leave uncultivated, children cultivate when we retain them near us."

"But first, I think," said Jarno, "you will once for all renounce the stage, as you have no talent for it."

Our friend was struck: he had to curb himself, for Jarno's harsh sentence had not a little wounded his self-love. "If you convince me of that," replied he, forcing a smile, "you will do me a service, though it is but a mournful service to rouse one from a pleasing dream."

"Without enlarging on the subject," answered Jarno, "I could merely wish you would go and fetch the children. The rest will come in course."

"I am ready," answered Wilhelm: "I am restless, and curious to see if I can get no further knowledge of the boy: I long to see the little girl who has attached herself so strangely to me."

It was agreed that he should lose no time in setting out. Next day he had prepared himself: his horse was saddled; he only waited for Lothario to take leave of him. At the dinner-hour they went as usual to table, not waiting for the master of the house. He did not come till late, and then sat down by them.

"I could bet," said Jarno, "that to-day you have again been making trial of your tenderness of heart: you have not been able to withstand the curiosity to see your quondam love."

"Guessed!" replied Lothario.

"Let us hear," said Jarno, "how it went: I long to know."

"I confess," replied Lothario, "the affair lay nearer my heart than it reasonably ought: so I formed the resolution of again riding out, and actually seeing the

"'Yes, so says every one that knew her half a score of years ago.'

"I continued putting various questions to her: my mistake was pleasant to me, even after I had found it out. I could not leave this living image of bygone blessedness that stood before me. The child, meanwhile, had gone away: it had wandered to the pond in search of flowers. She took her leave, and hastened after it.

"I had now, however, learned that my former love was really in her father's house. While riding forward, I employed myself in guessing whether it had been her cousin or she that had secured the child from harm. I more than once, in thought, repeated all the circumstances of the incident: I can remember few things that have affected me more gratefully. But I feel that I am still unwell: we must ask the doctor to deliver us from the remains of this pathetic humour."

With confidential narratives of pretty love adventures, it often happens as with ghost stories: when the first is told, the others follow of themselves.

Our little party, in recalling other times, found numerous passages of this description. Lothario had the most to tell. Jarno's histories were all of one peculiar character: what Wilhelm could disclose we already know. He was apprehensive they might mention his adventure with the countess; but it was not hinted at, not even in the remotest manner.

"It is true," observed Lothario, "there can scarcely any feeling in the world be more agreeable than when the heart, after a pause of indifference, again opens to love for some new object; yet I would for ever have renounced that happiness, had fate been pleased to unite me with Theresa. We are not always youths: we ought not always to be children. To the man who knows the world, who understands what he should do in it, what he should hope from it, nothing can be

more desirable than meeting with a wife who will everywhere coöperate with him, who will everywhere prepare his way for him; whose diligence takes up what his must leave; whose occupation spreads itself on every side, while his must travel forward on its single path. What a heaven had I figured for myself beside Theresa! Not the heaven of an enthusiastic bliss, but of a sure life on earth; order in prosperity, courage in adversity, care for the smallest, and a spirit capable of comprehending and managing the greatest. Oh! I saw in her the qualities which, when developed, make such women as we find in history, whose excellence appears to us far preferable to that of men, — this clearness of view, this expertness in all emergencies, this sureness in details, which brings the whole so accurately out, although they never seem to think of it. You may well forgive me," added he, and turning to Wilhelm, with a smile, "that I forsook Aurelia for Theresa: with the one I could expect a calm and cheerful life, with the other not a happy hour."

"I will confess," said Wilhelm, "that, in coming hither, I had no small anger in my heart against you; that I proposed to censure with severity your conduct to Aurelia."

"It was really censurable," said Lothario: "I should not have exchanged my friendship for her with the sentiment of love; I should not, in place of the respect which she deserved, have intruded an attachment she was neither calculated to excite nor to maintain. Alas! she was not lovely when she loved, — the greatest misery that can befall a woman."

"Well, it is past!" said Wilhelm. "We cannot always shun the things we blame; in spite of us, our feelings and our actions sometimes strangely swerve from their natural and right direction; yet there are certain duties which we never should lose sight of. Peace be to the ashes of our friend! Without censur-

ing ourselves or her, let us with sympathising hearts strew flowers upon her grave. But, at the grave in which the hapless mother sleeps, let me ask why you acknowledge not the child, — a son whom any father might rejoice in, and whom you appear entirely to overlook? With your pure and tender nature, how can you altogether cast away the instinct of a parent? All this while you have not spent one syllable upon that precious creature, of whose attractions I could say so much."

"Whom do you speak of?" asked Lothario: "I do not understand you."

"Of whom but of your son, Aurelia's son, the lovely child, to whose good fortune there is nothing wanting, but that a tender father should acknowledge and receive him."

"You mistake, my friend!" exclaimed Lothario; "Aurelia never had a son, at least by me: I know of no child, or I would with joy acknowledge it; and, even in the present case, I will gladly look upon the little creature as a relic of her, and take charge of educating it. But did she ever give you to believe that the boy was hers, was mine?"

"I cannot recollect that I ever heard a word from her expressly on the subject; but we took it up so, and I never for a moment doubted it."

"I can give you something like a clew to this perplexity," said Jarno. "An old woman, whom you must have noticed often, gave Aurelia the child: she accepted it with passion, hoping to alleviate her sorrows by its presence; and, in truth, it gave her many a comfortable hour."

This discovery awoke anxieties in Wilhelm: he thought of his dear Mignon and his beautiful Felix with the liveliest distinctness. He expressed his wish to remove them both from the state in which they were.

"We shall soon arrange it," said Lothario. "The little girl may be committed to Theresa: she cannot be in better hands. As for the boy, I think you should yourself take charge of him: what in us the women leave uncultivated, children cultivate when we retain them near us."

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"Let us hear," said Jarno, "how it went: I long to know."

"I confess," replied Lothario, "the affair lay nearer my heart than it reasonably ought: so I formed the resolution of again riding out, and actually seeing the

person whose renewed young image had affected me with such a pleasing illusion. I alighted at some distance from the house, and sent the horses to a side, that the children, who were playing at the door, might not be disturbed. I entered the house: by chance she met me just within the threshold; it was herself; and I recognised her, notwithstanding the striking change. She had grown stouter, and seemed to be larger; her gracefulness was shaded by a look of staidness; her vivacity had passed into a calm reflectiveness. Her head, which she once bore so airily and freely, drooped a little: slight furrows had been traced upon her brow.

"She cast down her eyes on seeing me, but no blush announced an inward movement of the heart. I held out my hand to her, she gave me hers; I inquired about her husband, he was absent; about her children, she stepped out and called them; all came in and gathered round her. Nothing is more charming than to see a mother with a child upon her arm; nothing is more reverend than a mother among many children. That I might say something, I asked the name of the youngest. She desired me to walk in and see her father; I agreed; she introduced me to the room, where everything was standing almost just as I had left it; and, what seemed stranger still, the fair cousin, her living image, was sitting on the very seat behind the spinning-wheel, where I had found my love so often in the self-same form. A little girl, the very figure of her mother, had come after us; and thus I stood in the most curious scene, between the future and the past, as in a grove of oranges, where within a little circle flowers and fruits are living, in successive stages of their growth, beside each other. The cousin went away to fetch us some refreshment: I gave the woman I had loved so much my hand, and said to her, 'I feel a true joy in seeing you again.' 'You are very good to say so,' answered she; 'but I also can assure you I feel the

highest joy. How often have I wished to see you once more in my life! I have wished it in moments which I regarded as my last.' She said this with a settled voice, without appearance of emotion, with that natural air which of old delighted me so much. The cousin returned, the father with her; and I leave you to conceive with what feelings I remained, and with what I came away."

CHAPTER VIII.

In his journey to the town, our friend was thinking of the lovely women whom he knew or had heard of: their curious fortunes, which contained so little happiness, were present to him with a sad distinctness. "Ah!" cried he, "poor Mariana! What shall I yet learn of thee? And thou, noble Amazon, glorious, protecting spirit, to whom I owe so much, whom I everywhere expect to meet, and nowhere see, in what mournful circumstances may I find thee, shouldst thou again appear before me!"

On his arrival in the town, there was not one of his acquaintances at home: he hastened to the theatre; he supposed they would be rehearsing. Here, however, all was still; the house seemed empty: one little door alone was open. Passing through it to the stage, he found Aurelia's ancient serving-maid, employed in sewing linen for a new decoration: there was barely light enough to let her work. Felix and Mignon were sitting by her on the floor: they had a book between them; and, while Mignon read aloud, Felix was repeating all the words, as if he, too, knew his letters, — as if he, too, could read.

The children started up, and ran to him: he embraced them with the tenderest feelings, and brought them closer to the woman. "Art thou the person," said he to her with an earnest voice, "from whom Aurelia received this child?" She looked up from her work, and turned her face to him: he saw her in full light; he started back in terror, — it was old Barbara.

"Where is Mariana?" cried he. "Far from here," replied the crone.

"And Felix —"

"Is the son of that unhappy and too true and tender-hearted girl. May you never feel what you have made us suffer! May the treasure which I now deliver you make you as happy as he made us wretched!"

She arose to go away: Wilhelm held her fast. "I mean not to escape you," said she: "let me fetch a paper that will make you glad and sorrowful."

She retired, and Wilhelm gazed upon the child with a painful joy: he durst not reckon him his own. "He is thine!" cried Mignon, "he is thine!" and passed the child to Wilhelm's knee.

Barbara came back, and handed him a letter. "Here are Mariana's last words," said she.

"She is dead!" cried he.

"Dead," said the old woman. "I wish to spare you all reproaches."

Astonished and confounded, Wilhelm broke up the letter; but scarcely had he read the first words of it when a bitter grief took hold of him: he let the letter fall, and sank upon a seat. Mignon hurried to him, trying to console him. In the meantime Felix had picked up the letter: he teased his playmate till she yielded, till she knelt beside him and read it over. Felix repeated the words, and Wilhelm was compelled to hear them twice. "If this sheet should ever reach thee, then lament thy ill-starred friend. Thy love has caused her death. The boy, whose birth I survive but a few days, is thine: I die faithful to thee, much as appearances may be against me; with thee I lost everything that bound me to life. I die content, for they have assured me that the child is healthy and will live. Listen to old Barbara; forgive her: farewell, and forget me not."

What a painful, and yet, to his comfort, half enigmatic letter! Its contents pierced through his heart, as the children, stuttering and stammering, pronounced and repeated them.

"That's what has come of it!" said the crone, not waiting till he had recovered. "Thank Heaven, that, having lost so true a love, you have still left you so fine a child. Your grief will be unequalled when you learn how the poor, good girl stood faithful to you to the end, how miserable she became, and what she sacrificed for your sake."

"Let me drain the cup of sorrow and of joy at once!" cried Wilhelm. "Convince me, even persuade me, that she was a good girl, that she deserved respect as well as love: then leave me to my grief for her irreparable loss."

"It is not yet time," said Barbara: "I have work to do, and I would not we were seen together. Let it be a secret that Felix is your son: I should have too much abuse to suffer from the company, for having formerly deceived them. Mignon will not betray us: she is good and close."

"I have known it long, and I said nothing," answered Mignon. "How is it possible?" cried Barbara. "Whence?" cried Wilhelm.

"The spirit told it me."

"Where? Where?"

"In the vault, when the old man drew his knife, it called to me, 'Bring his father;' and I thought it must be thou."

"*Who* called to thee?"

"I know not: in my heart, in my head, I was terrified; I trembled, I prayed; then it called, and I understood it."

Wilhelm pressed her to his heart, recommended Felix to her, and retired. He had not observed till then that she was grown much paler and thinner

than when he left her. Madam Melina was the first acquaintance he met: she received him in the friendliest manner. "Oh that you might find everything among us as you wished!" exclaimed she.

"I doubt it," answered Wilhelm: "I do not expect it. Confess that they have taken all their measures to dispense with me."

"Why would you go away?" replied his friend.

"We cannot soon enough convince ourselves," said he, "how very simply we may be dispensed with in the world. What important personages we conceive ourselves to be! We think that it is we alone who animate the circle we move in; that, in our absence, life, nourishment, and breath will make a general pause: and, alas! the void which occurs is scarcely remarked, so soon is it filled up again; nay, it is often but the place, if not for something better, at least for something more agreeable."

"And the sorrows of our friends we are not to take into account?"

"For our friends, too, it is well, when they soon recover their composure, when they say each to himself, there where thou art, there where thou remainest, accomplish what thou canst; be busy, be courteous, and let the present scene delight thee."

On a narrower inquiry, he found what he had looked for: the opera had been set up, and was exclusively attracting the attention of the public. His parts had in the meanwhile been distributed between Horatio and Laertes, and both of them were in the habit of eliciting from the spectators far more liberal applause than he had ever been enabled to obtain.

Laertes entered: and Madam Melina cried, "Look you here at this lucky fellow; he is soon to be a capitalist, or Heaven knows what!" Wilhelm, in embracing him, discovered that his coat was superfine: the

rest of his apparel was simple, but of the very best materials.

"Solve me the riddle!" cried our friend.

"You are still in time to learn." replied Laertes, "that my running to and fro is now about to be repaid; that a partner in a large commercial house is turning to advantage my acquirements from books or observation, and allowing me a share with him. I would give something, could I purchase back my confidence in women: there is a pretty niece in the house; and I see well enough, that, if I pleased, I might soon be a made man."

"You have not heard," said Frau Melina, "that a marriage has already taken place among ourselves? Serlo is actually wedded to the fair Elmira: her father would not tolerate their secret correspondence."

They talked in this manner about many things that had occurred while he was absent: nor was it difficult for him to observe, that, according to the present temper and constitution of the company, his dismissal had already taken place.

He impatiently expected Barbara, who had appointed him to wait for her far in the night. She was to come when all were sleeping: she required as many preparations as if she had been the youngest maiden gliding in to her beloved. Meanwhile he read a hundred times the letter she had given him, — read with unspeakable delight the word *faithful* in the hand of his darling, with horror the announcement of her death, whose approaches she appeared to view unmoved.

Midnight was past, when something rustled at the half-open door, and Barbara came in with a little basket. "I am to tell you the story of our woes," said she: "and I must believe that you will sit unmoved at the recital; that you are waiting for me but to satisfy your curiosity; that you will now, as you did formerly, retire within your cold selfishness, while our hearts are

breaking. But look you here! Thus, on that happy evening, did I bring you the bottle of champagne; thus did I place the three glasses on the table: and as you then began, with soft nursery tales, to cozen us and lull us asleep; so will I now with stern truths instruct you and keep you waking."

Wilhelm knew not what to say, when the old woman, in fact, let go the cork, and filled the three glasses to the brim.

"Drink!" cried she, having emptied at a draft her foaming glass. "Drink, ere the spirit of it pass! This third glass shall froth away untasted to the memory of my unhappy Mariana. How red were her lips when she then drank your health! Ah, and now for ever pale and cold!"

"Sibyl! Fury!" cried Wilhelm, springing up, and striking the table with his fist, "what evil spirit possesses thee and drives thee? For what dost thou take me, that thou thinkest the simplest narrative of Mariana's death and sorrows will not harrow me enough, but usest these hellish arts to sharpen my torment? If thy insatiable greediness is such, that thou must revel at the funeral-table, drink and speak! I have loathed thee from of old; and I cannot reckon Mariana guiltless while I even look upon thee, her companion."

"Softly, mein Herr!" replied the crone: "you shall not ruffle me. Your debts to us are deep and dark: the railing of a debtor does not anger one. But you are right: the simplest narrative will punish you sufficiently. Hear, then, the struggle and the victory of Mariana striving to continue yours."

"Continue mine?" cried Wilhelm: "what fable dost thou mean to tell me?"

"Interrupt me not," said she; "hear me, and then give what belief you list: to me it is all one. Did you not, the last night you were with us, find a letter in the room, and take it with you?"

"I found the letter *after* I had taken it with me: it was lying in the neckerchief, which, in the warmth of my love, I had seized and carried off."

"What did the sheet contain?"

"The expectation of an angry lover to be better treated on the next than he had been on the preceding evening. And that you kept your word to him, I need not be told; for I saw him with my own eyes gliding from your house before daybreak."

"You may have seen him; but what occurred within, how sadly Mariana passed that night, how fretfully I passed it, you are yet to learn. I will be altogether candid: I will neither hide nor palliate the fact, that I persuaded Mariana to yield to the solicitations of a certain Norberg; it was with repugnance that she followed my advice, nay, that she even heard it. He was rich; he seemed attached: I hoped he would be constant. Soon after, he was forced to go upon his journey; and Mariana became acquainted with you. What had I then to abide! What to hinder, what to undergo! 'Oh!' cried she often, 'hadst thou spared my youth, my innocence, but four short weeks, I might have found a worthy object of my love; I had then been worthy of him; and love might have given, with a quiet conscience, what now I have sold against my will.' She entirely abandoned herself to her affection for you: I need not ask if you were happy. Over her understanding I had an unbounded power, for I knew the means of satisfying all her little inclinations: but over her heart I had no control; for she never sanctioned what I did for her, what I counselled her to do, when her heart said nay. It was only to irresistible necessity that she would yield, but ere long the necessity appeared to her extremely pressing. In the first period of her youth, she had never known want; by a complication of misfortunes, her people lost their fortune; the poor girl had been used to have a number of

conveniences; and upon her young spirit certain principles of honour had been stamped, which made her restless, without much helping her. She had not the smallest skill in worldly matters: she was innocent in the strictest meaning of the word. She had no idea that one could buy without paying; nothing frightened her more than being in debt: she always rather liked to give than take. This, and this alone, was what made it possible that she could be constrained to give herself away, in order to get rid of various little debts which weighed upon her."

"And couldst not thou," cried Wilhelm, in an angry tone, "have saved her?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the beldame, "with hunger and need, with sorrow and privation; but for this I was not disposed."

"Abominable, base procuress! So thou hast sacrificed the hapless creature! Offered her up to thy throat, to thy insatiable maw!"

"It were better to compose yourself, and cease your reviling," said the dame. "If you will revile, go to your high, noble houses: there you will meet with many a mother, full of anxious cares to find out for some lovely, heavenly maiden the most odious of men, provided he be the richest. See the poor creature shivering and faltering before her fate, and nowhere finding consolation, till some more experienced female lets her understand that, by marriage, she acquires the right, in future, to dispose of her heart and person as she pleases."

"Peace!" cried Wilhelm. "Dost thou think that one crime can be the excuse of another? To thy story, without further observations!"

"Do you listen, then, without blaming! Mariana became yours against my will. In this adventure, at least, I have nothing to reproach myself with. Norberg returned; he made haste to visit Mariana: she

received him coldly and angrily, — would not even admit him to a kiss. I employed all my art in apologising for her conduct, — gave him to understand that her confessor had awakened her conscience; that, so long as conscientious scruples lasted, one was bound to respect them. I at last so far succeeded that he went away, I promising to do my utmost for him. He was rich and rude; but there was a touch of goodness in him, and he loved Mariana without limit. He promised to be patient, and I laboured with the greatest ardour not to try him too far. With Mariana I had a stubborn contest: I persuaded her, nay, I may call it forced her, by the threat of leaving her, to write to Norberg, and invite him for the night. You came, and by chance picked up his answer in the neckerchief. Your presence broke my game. For scarcely were you gone, when she anew began her lamentation: she swore she would not be unfaithful to you; she was so passionate, so frantic, that I could not help sincerely pitying her. In the end, I promised that for this night also I would pacify her lover, and send him off, under some pretence or other. I entreated her to go to bed, but she did not seem to trust me: she kept on her clothes, and at last fell asleep, without undressing, agitated and exhausted with weeping as she was.

"Norberg came; representing in the blackest hues her conscientious agonies and her repentance, I endeavoured to retain him: he wished to see her, and I went into the room to prepare her; he followed me, and both of us at once came forward to her bed. She awoke, sprang wildly up, and tore herself from our arms: she conjured and begged, she entreated, threatened, and declared she would not yield. She was improvident enough to let fall some words about the true state of her affections, which poor Norberg had to understand in a spiritual sense. At length he left her, and she locked her door. I kept him long with me,

and talked with him about her situation. I told him that she was with child; that, poor girl, she should be humoured. Hé was so delighted with his fatherhood, with his prospect of a boy, that he granted everything she wished: he promised rather to set out and travel for a time, than vex his dear, and injure her by these internal troubles. With such intentions, at an early hour he glided out; and if you, mein Herr, stood sentry by our house, there was nothing wanting to your happiness, but to have looked into the bosom of your rival, whom you thought so favoured and so fortunate, and whose appearance drove you to despair."

"Art thou speaking truth?" said Wilhelm.

"True," said the crone, "as I still hope to drive you to despair."

"Yes: certainly you would despair, if I could rightly paint to you the following morning. How cheerfully did she awake! how kindly did she call me in, how warmly thank me, how cordially press me to her bosom! 'Now,' said she, stepping up to her mirror with a smile, 'can I again take pleasure in myself, and in my looks, since once more I am my own, and his, my one beloved friend's. How sweet is it to conquer! How I thank thee for taking charge of me; for having turned thy prudence and thy understanding, once, at least, to my advantage! Stand by me, and devise the means of making me entirely happy!'

"I assented, would not irritate her: I flattered her hopes, and she caressed me tenderly. If she retired but a moment from the window, I was made to stand and watch: for you, of course, would pass; for she at least would see you. Thus did we spend the restless day. At night, at the accustomed hour, we looked for you with certainty. I was already out waiting at the staircase: I grew weary, and came in to her again. With surprise I found her in her military dress: she looked cheerful and charming beyond what I had ever

seen her. 'Do I not deserve,' said she, 'to appear to-night in man's apparel? Have I not struggled bravely? My dearest shall see me as he saw me for the first time: I will press him as tenderly and with greater freedom to my heart than then; for am I not his much more than I was then, when a noble resolution had not freed me? But,' added she, after pausing for a little, 'I have not yet entirely won him; I must still risk the uttermost, in order to be worthy, to be certain of possessing him; I must disclose the whole to him, discover to him all my state, then leave it to himself to keep or to reject me. This scene I am preparing for my friend, preparing for myself; and, were his feelings capable of casting me away, I should then belong again entirely to myself; my punishment would bring me consolation, I would suffer all that fate could lay upon me.'

"With such purposes and hopes, mein Herr, this lovely girl expected you: you came not. Oh! how shall I describe the state of watching and of hope? I see thee still before me, — with what love, what heartfelt love, thou spokest of the man whose cruelty thou hadst not yet experienced."

"Good, dear Barbara!" cried Wilhelm, springing up, and seizing the old woman by the hand, "we have had enough of mummery and preparation! Thy indifferent, thy calm, contented tone betrays thee. Give me back my Mariana! She is living, she is near at hand. Not in vain didst thou choose this late, lonely hour to visit me; not in vain hast thou prepared me by thy most delicious narrative. Where is she? Where hast thou hidden her? I believe all, I will promise to believe all, so thou but show her to me, so thou give her to my arms. The shadow of her I have seen already: let me clasp her once more to my bosom. I will kneel before her, I will entreat forgiveness; I will congratulate her upon her victory over herself and thee; I will

bring my Felix to her. Come! Where hast thou concealed her? Leave *her*, leave me no longer in uncertainty! Thy object is attained. Where hast thou hidden her? Let me light thee with this candle, let me once more see her fair and kindly face!"

He had pulled old Barbara from her chair: she stared at him; tears started into her eyes, wild pangs of grief took hold of her. "What luckless error," cried she, "leaves you still a moment's hope? Yes, I have hidden her, but beneath the ground: neither the light of the sun nor any social taper shall again illuminate her kindly face. Take the boy Felix to her grave, and say to him, 'There lies thy mother, whom thy father doomed unheard.' The heart of Mariana beats no longer with impatience to behold you: not in a neighbouring chamber is she waiting the conclusion of my narrative or fable; the dark chamber has received her, to which no bridegroom follows, from which none comes to meet a lover."

She cast herself upon the floor beside a chair, and wept bitterly. Wilhelm now, for the first time, felt entirely convinced that Mariana was no more: his emotions it is easy to conceive. The old woman rose: "I have nothing more to tell you," cried she, and threw a packet on the table. "Here are some writings that will put your cruelty to shame: peruse these sheets with unwet eyes, if you can." She glided softly out. Our friend had not the heart to open the pocketbook that night; he had himself presented it to Mariana; he knew that she had carefully preserved in it every letter he had sent her. Next morning he prevailed upon himself: he untied the ribbon; little notes came forward written with pencil in his own hand, and recalled to him every situation, from the first day of their graceful acquaintance to the last of their stern separation. In particular, it was not without acute anguish that he read a small series of billets which had

been addressed to himself, and to which, as he saw from their tenor, Werner had refused admittance.

"No one of my letters has yet penetrated to thee; my entreaties, my prayers, have not reached thee; was it thyself that gave these cruel orders? Shall I never see thee more? Yet again I attempt it: I entreat thee, come, oh, come! I ask not to retain thee, if I might but once more press thee to my heart."

"When I used to sit beside thee, holding thy hands, looking in thy eyes, and with the full heart of love and trust to call thee 'Dear, dear good Wilhelm!' it would please thee so that I had to repeat it over and over. I repeat it once again: 'Dear, dear good Wilhelm! Be good as thou wert: come, and leave me not to perish in my wretchedness.'"

"Thou regardest me as guilty: I am so, but not as thou thinkest. Come, let me have this single comfort, to be altogether known to thee, let what will befall me afterward."

"Not for my sake alone, for thy own too, I beg of thee to come. I feel the intolerable pains thou art suffering, whilst thou fleest from me. Come, that our separation may be less cruel! Perhaps I was never worthy of thee till this moment, when thou art repelling me to boundless woe."

"By all that is holy, by all that can touch a human heart, I call upon thee! It involves the safety of a soul, it involves a life, two lives, one of which must ever be dear to thee. This, too, thy suspicion will discredit: yet I will speak it in the hour of death; the child which I carry under my heart is thine. Since I began to love thee, no other man has even pressed my

hand. Oh, that thy love, that thy uprightness, had been the companions of my youth!"

"Thou wilt not hear me? I must even be silent. But these letters will not die: perhaps they will speak to thee, when the shroud is covering my lips, and the voice of thy repentance cannot reach my ear. Through my weary life, to the last moment, this will be my only comfort, that, though I cannot call myself blameless, toward thee I am free from blame."

Wilhelm could proceed no farther: he resigned himself entirely to his sorrow, which became still more afflicting; when, Laertes entering, he was obliged to hide his feelings. Laertes showed a purse of ducats, and began to count and reckon them, assuring Wilhelm that there could be nothing finer in the world than for a man to feel himself on the way to wealth; that nothing then could trouble or detain him. Wilhelm bethought him of his dream, and smiled; but at the same time, he remembered with a shudder, that in his vision Mariana had forsaken him to follow his departed father, and that both of them at last had moved about the garden, hovering in the air like spirits.

Laertes forced him from his meditations: he brought him to a coffee-house, where, immediately on Wilhelm's entrance, several persons gathered around him. They were men who had applauded his performance on the stage: they expressed their joy at meeting him; lamenting that, as they had heard, he meant to leave the theatre. They spoke so reasonably and kindly of himself and his acting, of his talent, and their hopes from it, that Wilhelm, not without emotion, cried at last, "Oh, how infinitely precious would such sympathy have been to me some months ago! How instructive, how encouraging! Never had I turned my mind so totally from the concerns of

the stage, never had I gone so far as to despair of the public."

"So far as this," said an elderly man who now stepped forward, "we should never go. The public is large: true judgment, true feeling, are not quite so rare as one believes; only the artist ought not to demand an unconditional approval of his work. Unconditional approval is always the least valuable: conditional you gentlemen are not content with. In life, as in art, I know well, a person must take counsel with himself when he purposes to do or to produce anything: but, when it is produced or done, he must listen with attention to the voices of a number; and, with a little practice, out of these many votes he will be able to collect a perfect judgment. The few who could well have saved us this trouble for the most part hold their peace."

"This they should not do," said Wilhelm. "I have often heard people, who themselves kept silence in regard to works of merit, complain and lament that silence was kept."

"To-day, then, we will speak aloud," cried a young man. "You must dine with us; and we will try to pay off a little of the debt which we have owed to you, and sometimes also to our good Aurelia."

This invitation Wilhelm courteously declined; he went to Frau Melina, whom he wished to speak with on the subject of the children, as he meant to take them from her.

Old Barbara's secret was not too religiously observed by him. He betrayed himself so soon as he again beheld the lovely Felix. "Oh, my child!" cried he: "my dear child!" He lifted him, and pressed him to his heart.

"Father! what hast thou brought for me?" cried the child. Mignon looked at both, as if she meant to warn them not to blab.

"What new phenomenon is this?" said Frau Melina. They got the children sent away; and Wilhelm, thinking that he did not owe old Barbara the strictest secrecy, disclosed the whole affair to Frau Melina. She viewed him with a smile. "Oh, these credulous men!" exclaimed she. "If anything is lying in their path, it is so easy to impose it on them; while in other cases they will neither look to the right nor left, and can value nothing which they have not previously impressed with the stamp of an arbitrary passion!" She sighed, against her will: if our friend had not been altogether blind, he must have noticed in her conduct an affection for him which had never been entirely subdued.

He now spoke with her about the children, — how he purposed to keep Felix with him, and to place Mignon in the country. Madam Melina, though sorry at the thought of parting with them, said the plan was good, nay, absolutely necessary. Felix was becoming wild with her, and Mignon seemed to need fresh air and other occupation: she was sickly, and was not yet recovering.

"Let it not mislead you," added Frau Melina, "that I have lightly hinted doubts about the boy's being really yours. The old woman, it is true, deserves but little confidence; yet a person who invents untruths for her advantage, may likewise speak the truth when truths are profitable to her. Aurelia she had hoodwinked to believe that Felix was Lothario's son; and it is a property of us women, that we cordially like the children of our lovers, though we do not know the mothers, or even hate them from the heart." Felix came jumping in: she pressed him to her with a tenderness which was not usual to her.

Wilhelm hastened home, and sent for Barbara, who, however, would not undertake to meet him till the twilight. He received her angrily. "There is nothing

in the world more shameful," said he, "than establishing one's self on lies and fables. Already thou hast done much mischief with them; and now, when thy word could decide the fortune of my life, now must I stand dubious, not venturing to call the child my own, though to possess him without scruple would form my highest happiness. I cannot look upon thee, scandalous creature, without hatred and contempt."

"Your conduct, if I speak with candour," said the old woman, "appears to me intolerable. Even if Felix were not yours, he is the fairest and the loveliest child in nature: one might purchase him at any price, to have him always near one. Is he not worthy your acceptance? Do not I deserve for my care, for the labour I have had with him, a little pension for the small remainder of my life? Oh, you gentlemen who know no want! It is well for you to talk of truth and honour; but how the miserable being whose smallest necessity is unprovided for, who sees in her perplexities no friend, no help, no counsel, how she is to press through the crowd of selfish men, and to starve in silence, you are seldom at the trouble to consider. Did you read Mariana's letters? They are the letters she wrote to you at that unhappy season. It was in vain that I attempted to approach you to deliver you these sheets: your savage brother-in-law had so begirt you that craft and cunning were of no avail; and at last, when he began to threaten me and Mariana with imprisonment, I had then to cease my efforts and renounce all hope. Does not everything agree with what I told you? And does not Norberg's letter put the story altogether out of doubt?"

"What letter?" asked he.

"Did you not find it in the pocketbook?" said Barbara.

"I have not yet read all of them."

"Give me the pocketbook: on that paper everything depends. Norberg's luckless billet caused this sorrowful perplexity: another from his hand may loose the knots, so far as aught may still depend upon unravelling them." She took a letter from the book: Wilhelm recognised that odious writing; he constrained himself, and read, —

"Tell me, girl, how hast thou got such power over me? I would not have believed that a goddess herself could make a sighing lover of me. Instead of hastening toward me with open arms, thou shrankest back from me: one might have taken it for aversion. Is it fair that I should spend the night with old Barbara, sitting on a trunk, and but two doors between me and my pretty Mariana? It is too bad, I tell thee! I have promised to allow thee time to think, not to press thee unrelentingly: I could run mad at every wasted quarter of an hour. Have not I given thee gifts according to my power? Dost thou still doubt of my love? What wilt thou have? Do but tell me: thou shalt want for nothing. Would the devil had the priest that put such stuff into thy head! Why didst thou go to such a churl? There are plenty of them that allow young people somewhat. In short, I tell thee, things must alter: in two days I must have an answer, for I am to leave the town; and, if thou become not kind and friendly to me, thou shalt never see me more. . . ."

In this style the letter spun itself to great length; turning, to Wilhelm's painful satisfaction, still about the same point, and testifying for the truth of the account which he had got from Barbara. A second letter clearly proved that Mariana, in the sequel, also had maintained her purpose; and it was not without heartfelt grief, that, out of these and other papers, Wilhelm learned the history of the unlucky girl to the very hour of her death. Barbara had gradually tamed

rude, regardless Norberg, by announcing to him Mariana's death, and leaving him in the belief that Felix was his son. Once or twice he had sent her money, which, however, she retained for herself; having talked Aurelia into taking charge of the child. But, unhappily, this secret source of riches did not long endure. Norberg, by a life of riot, had impaired his fortune; and, by repeated love-affairs, his heart was rendered callous to his supposed first-born.

Probable as all this seemed, beautifully as it all agreed, Wilhelm did not venture to give way to joy. He still appeared to dread a present coming from his evil Genius.

"Your jealous fears," said Barbara, who guessed his mood of mind, "time alone can cure. Look upon the child as a stranger one; take stricter heed of him on that account; observe his gifts, his temper, his capacities; and if you do not, by and by, discover in him the exact resemblance of yourself, your eyes must certainly be bad. Of this I can assure you, — were I a man, no one should foist a child on me; but it is a happiness for women that, in these cases, men are not so quick of sight."

These things over, Wilhelm and Barbara parted: he was to take Felix with him; she, to carry Mignon to Theresa, and afterward to live in any place she pleased, upon a small annuity which he engaged to settle on her.

He sent for Mignon, to prepare her for the new arrangement. "Master," said she, "keep me with thee: it will do me good, and do me ill."

He told her that, as she was now grown up, there should be something further done for her instruction. "I am sufficiently instructed," answered she, "to love and grieve."

He directed her attention to her health, and showed that she required continuous care, and the direction of

a good physician. "Why care for me," said she, "when there are so many things to care for?"

After he had laboured greatly to persuade her that he could not take her with him, that he would conduct her to a place where he might often see her, she appeared as if she had not heard a word of it. "Thou wishest not to have me with thee," said she. "Perhaps it is better: send me to the old harper; the poor man is lonely where he is."

Wilhelm tried to show her that the old man was in comfortable circumstances. "Every hour I long for him," replied the child.

"I did not see," said Wilhelm, "that thou wert so fond of him when he was living with us."

"I was frightened for him when he was awake; I could not bear his eyes: but, when he was asleep, I liked so well to sit by him! I used to chase the flies from him: I could not look at him enough. Oh! he has stood by me in fearful moments: none knows how much I owe him. Had I known the road, I should have run away to him already."

Wilhelm set the circumstances in detail before her: he said that she had always been a reasonable child, and that, on this occasion also, she might do as she desired. "Reason is cruel," said she; "the heart is better: I will go as thou requirest, only leave me Felix."

After much discussion her opinion was not altered; and Wilhelm at last resolved on giving Barbara both the children, and sending them together to Theresa. This was the easier for him, as he still feared to look upon the lovely Felix as his son. He would take him on his arm, and carry him about: the child delighted to be held before the glass; Wilhelm also liked, though unavowedly, to hold him there, and seek resemblances between their faces. If for a moment any striking similarity appeared between them, he would press the

boy in his arms; and then, at once affrighted by the thought that he might be mistaken, he would set him down, and let him run away. "Oh," cried he, "if I were to appropriate this priceless treasure, and it were then to be snatched from me, I should be the most unhappy man on earth!"

The children had been sent away; and Wilhelm was about to take a formal leave of the theatre, when he felt that in reality he had already taken leave, and needed but to go. Mariana was no more: his two guardian spirits had departed, and his thoughts hied after them. The fair boy hovered like a beautiful uncertain vision in the eyes of his imagination: he saw him, at Theresa's hand, running through the fields and woods, forming his mind and person in the free air, beside a free and cheerful foster-mother. Theresa had become far dearer to him since he figured her in company with Felix. Even while sitting in the theatre, he thought of her with smiles; he was almost in her own case: the stage could now produce no more illusion in him.

Serlo and Melina were excessively polite to him, when they observed that he was making no pretensions to his former place. A portion of the public wished to see him act again: this he could not accede to; nor in the company did any one desire it, saving Frau Melina.

Of this friend he now took leave; he was moved at parting with her: he exclaimed, "Why do we presume to promise anything depending on an unknown future? The most slight engagement we have not power to keep, far less a purpose of importance. I feel ashamed in recollecting what I promised to you all, in that unhappy night, when we were lying plundered, sick, and wounded, crammed into a miserable tavern. How did misfortune elevate my courage! what a treasure did I think I had found in my good wishes! And of all this not a jot has taken effect! I leave you as your

debtor; and my comfort is, that our people prized my promise at its actual worth, and never more took notice of it."

"Be not unjust to yourself," said Frau Melina: "if no one acknowledges what you have done for us, I at least will not forget it. Our whole condition had been different, if you had not been with us. But it is with our purposes as with our wishes. They seem no longer what they were, when they have been accomplished, been fulfilled; and we think we have done, have wished for, nothing."

"You shall not, by your friendly statement," answered Wilhelm, "put my conscience to peace. I shall always look upon myself as in your debt."

"Nay, perhaps you are so," said Madam Melina, "but not in the manner you suppose. We reckon it a shame to fail in the fulfilment of a promise we have uttered with the voice. O my friend! a worthy person by his very presence promises us much. The confidence he elicits, the inclination he inspires, the hopes he awakens, are unbounded: he is and continues in our debt, although he does not know it. Fare you well! If our external circumstances have been happily repaired by your direction, in my mind there is, by your departure, produced a void which will not be filled up again so easily."

Before leaving the city, Wilhelm wrote a copious sheet to Werner. He had before exchanged some letters; but, not being able to agree, they had at length ceased to write. Now, however, Wilhelm had again approximated to his brother: he was just about to do what Werner had so earnestly desired. He could say, "I am abandoning the stage: I mean to join myself with men whose intercourse, in every sense, must lead me to a sure and suitable activity." He inquired about his property; and it now seemed strange to him, that he had never, for so long a time, disturbed himself

about it. He knew not that it is the manner of all persons who attach importance to their inward cultivation altogether to neglect their outward circumstances. This had been Wilhelm's case: he now for the first time seemed to notice that, to work effectively, he stood in need of outward means. He entered on his journey, this time, in a temper altogether different from that of last; the prospects he had in view were charming; he hoped to meet with something cheerful by the way.

CHAPTER IX.

On returning to Lothario's castle, Wilhelm found that changes had occurred. Jarno met him with the tidings, that, Lothario's uncle being dead, the baron had himself set out to take possession of the heritage. "You come in time," said he, "to help the abbé and me. Lothario has commissioned us to purchase some extensive properties of land in this quarter: he has long contemplated the bargain, and we have now got cash and credit just in season. The only point which made us hesitate was, that a distant trading-house had also views upon the same estates: at length we have determined to make common cause with it, as otherwise we might outbid each other without need or reason. The trader seems to be a prudent man. At present we are making estimates and calculations: we must also settle economically how the lands are to be shared, so that each of us may have a fine estate." The papers were submitted to our friend: the fields, meadows, houses, were inspected; and, though Jarno and the abbé seemed to understand the matter fully, Wilhelm could not help desiring that Theresa had been with them.

In these labours several days were spent, and Wilhelm had scarcely time to tell his friends of his adventures and his dubious fatherhood. This incident, to him so interesting, they treated with indifference and levity.

He had noticed, that they frequently in confidential conversation, while at table or in walks, would suddenly stop short, and give their words another applica-

tion; thereby showing, at least, that they had on the anvil many things which were concealed from him. He bethought him of what Lydia had said; and he put the greater faith in it, as one entire division of the castle had always been inaccessible to him. The way to certain galleries, particularly to the ancient tower, with which externally he was so well acquainted, he had often sought, and hitherto in vain.

One evening Jarno said to him, "We can now consider you as ours, with such security, that it were unjust if we did not introdúce you deeper into our mysteries. It is right that a man, when he first enters upon life, should think highly of himself, should determine to attain many eminent distinctions, should endeavour to make all things possible; but, when his education has proceeded to a certain pitch, it is advantageous for him, that he learn to lose himself among a mass of men, that he learn to live for the sake of others, and to forget himself in an activity prescribed by duty. It is then that he first becomes acquainted with himself, for it is conduct alone that compares us with others. You shall soon see what a curious little world is at your very hand, and how well you are known in it. To-morrow morning before sunrise be dressed and ready."

Jarno came at the appointed hour: he led our friend through certain known and unknown chambers of the castle, then through several galleries; till at last they reached a large old door, strongly framed with iron. Jarno knocked; the door went up a little, so as to admit one person. Jarno shoved in our friend, but did not follow him. Wilhelm found himself in an obscure and narrow stand: all was dark around him; and, when he tried to go a step forward, he found himself hemmed in. A voice not altogether strange to him cried, "Enter!" and he now discovered that the sides of the place where he was were merely hung with

tapestry, through which a feeble light glimmered in to him. "Enter!" cried the voice again: he raised the tapestry, and entered.

The hall in which he now stood appeared to have at one time been a chapel: instead of the altar, he observed a large table raised some steps above the floor, and covered with a green cloth hanging over it. On the top of this, a drawn curtain seemed as if it hid a picture; on the sides were spaces beautifully worked, and covered in with fine wire netting, like the shelves of a library; only here, instead of books, a multitude of rolls had been inserted. Nobody was in the hall: the rising sun shone through the window, right on Wilhelm, and kindly saluted him as he came in.

"Be seated!" cried a voice, which seemed to issue from the altar. Wilhelm placed himself in a small arm-chair, which stood against the tapestry where he had entered. There was no seat but this in the room: Wilhelm had to be content with it, though the morning radiance dazzled him; the chair stood fast, he could only keep his hand before his eyes.

But now the curtain, which hung down above the altar, went asunder with a gentle rustling, and showed, within a picture-frame, a dark, empty aperture. A man stepped forward at it, in a common dress, saluted the astonished looker-on, and said to him, "Do you not recognise me? Among the many things which you would like to know, do you feel no curiosity to learn where your grandfather's collection of pictures and statues are at present? Have you forgot the painting which you once so much delighted in? Where, think you, is the sick king's son now languishing?" Wilhelm, without difficulty, recognised the stranger, whom, in that important night, he had conversed with at the inn. "Perhaps," continued his interrogator, "we should now be less at variance in regard to destiny and character."

Wilhelm was about to answer, when the curtain quickly flew together. "Strange!" said Wilhelm to himself: "can chance occurrences have a connection? Is what we call Destiny but Chance? Where *is* my grandfather's collection? and why am I reminded of it in these solemn moments?"

He had not leisure to pursue his thoughts: the curtain once more parted; and a person stood before him, whom he instantly perceived to be the country clergyman that had attended him and his companions on that pleasure-sail of theirs. He had a resemblance to the abbé, though he seemed to be a different person. With a cheerful countenance, in a tone of dignity, he said, "To guard from error is not the instructor's duty, but to lead the erring pupil; nay, to let him quaff his error in deep, satiating draughts, this is the instructor's wisdom. He who only tastes his error, will long dwell with it, will take delight in it as in a singular felicity; while he who drains it to the dregs will, if he be not crazy, find it out." The curtain closed again, and Wilhelm had a little time to think. "What error can he mean," said he within himself, "but the error which has clung to me through my whole life,—that I sought for cultivation where it was not to be found; that I fancied I could form a talent in me, while without the smallest gift for it?"

The curtain dashed asunder faster than before: an officer advanced, and said in passing, "Learn to know the men who may be trusted!" The curtain closed; and Wilhelm did not long consider, till he found this officer to be the one who had embraced him in the count's park, and had caused his taking Jarno for a crimp. How that stranger had come hither, who he was, were riddles to our friend. "If so many men," cried he, "took interest in thee, know thy way of life, and how it should be carried on, why did they not conduct thee with greater strictness, with greater seri-

ousness? Why did they favour thy silly sports, instead of drawing thee away from them?"

"Dispute not with us!" cried a voice. "Thou art saved, thou art on the way to the goal. None of thy follies wilt thou repent; none wilt thou wish to repeat; no luckier destiny can be allotted to a man." The curtain went asunder, and in full armour stood the old king of Denmark in the space. "I am thy father's spirit," said the figure; "and I depart in comfort since my wishes for thee are accomplished, in a higher sense than I myself contemplated. Steep regions cannot be surmounted save by winding paths: on the plain, straight roads conduct from place to place. Farewell, and think of me when thou enjoyest what I have provided for thee."

Wilhelm was exceedingly amazed and struck: he thought it was his father's voice; and yet in truth it was not: the present and the past alike confounded and perplexed him.

He had not meditated long when the abbé came to view, and placed himself behind the green table. "Come hither!" cried he to his marvelling friend. He went, and mounted up the steps. On the green cloth lay a little roll. "Here is your indenture," said the abbé: "take it to heart; it is of weighty import." Wilhelm lifted, opened it, and read:

INDENTURE.

Art is long, life short, judgment difficult, opportunity transient. To act is easy, to think is hard; to act according to our thought is troublesome. Every beginning is cheerful: the threshold is the place of expectation. The boy stands astonished, his impressions guide him: he learns sportfully, seriousness comes on him by surprise. Imitation is born with us: what should be imitated is not easy to discover. The excellent is

rarely found, more rarely valued. The height charms us, the steps to it do not: with the summit in our eye, we love to walk along the plain. It is but a part of art that can be taught: the artist needs it all. Who knows it half, speaks much, and is always wrong: who knows it wholly, inclines to act, and speaks seldom or late. The former have no secrets and no force: the instruction they can give is like baked bread, savoury and satisfying for a single day; but flour cannot be sown, and seed-corn ought not to be ground. Words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not to be explained by words. The spirit in which we act is the highest matter. Action can be understood and again represented by the spirit alone. No one knows what he is doing while he acts aright, but of what is wrong we are always conscious. Whoever works with symbols only is a pedant, a hypocrite, or a bungler. There are many such, and they like to be together. Their babbling detains the scholar: their obstinate mediocrity vexes even the best. The instruction which the true artist gives us opens the mind: for, where words fail him, deeds speak. The true scholar learns from the known to unfold the unknown, and approaches more and more to being a master.

"Enough!" cried the abbé: "the rest in due time. Now look round you among these cases."

Wilhelm went, and read the titles of the rolls. With astonishment he found, "Lothario's Apprenticeship," "Jarno's Apprenticeship," and his own Apprenticeship placed there, with many others whose names he did not know.

"May I hope to cast a look into these rolls?"

"In this chamber there is now nothing hid from you."

"May I put a question?"

"Without scruple; and you may expect a positive reply, if it concerns a matter which is nearest your heart, and ought to be so."

"Good, then! Ye marvellous sages, whose sight has pierced so many secrets, can you tell me whether Felix is in truth my son?"

"Hail to you for this question!" cried the abbé, clapping hands for joy. "Felix is your son! By the holiest that lies hid among us, I swear to you Felix is your son; nor, in our opinion, was the mother that is gone unworthy of you. Receive the lovely child from our hands: turn round, and venture to be happy."

Wilhelm heard a noise behind him: he turned round, and saw a child's face peeping archly through the tapestry at the end of the room; it was Felix. The boy playfully hid himself so soon as he was noticed. "Come forward!" cried the abbé: he came running; his father rushed toward him, took him in his arms, and pressed him to his heart. "Yes! I feel it," cried he, "thou art mine! What a gift of Heaven have I to thank my friends for! Whence or how comest thou, my child, at this important moment?"

"Ask not," said the abbé. "Hail to thee, young man! Thy apprenticeship is done: Nature has pronounced thee free."

Book VIII.

CHAPTER I.

FELIX skipped into the garden; Wilhelm followed him with rapture: a lovely morning was displaying everything with fresh charms; our friend enjoyed the most delightful moment. Felix was new in the free and lordly world, nor did his father know much more than he about the objects concerning which the little creature was repeatedly and unweariedly inquiring. At last they joined the gardener, who had to tell them the names and uses of a multitude of plants. Wilhelm looked on nature as with unscaled eyes: the child's new-fangled curiosity first made him sensible how weak an interest he himself had taken in external things, how small his actual knowledge was. Not till this day, the happiest of his life, did his own cultivation seem to have commenced: he felt the necessity of learning, being called upon to teach.

Jarno and the abbé did not show themselves again till evening, when they brought a guest along with them. Wilhelm viewed the stranger with amazement; he could scarce believe his eyes: it was Werner, who likewise, for a moment, hesitated in his recognition. They embraced each other tenderly: neither of them could conceal that he thought the other greatly altered. Werner declared that his friend was taller, stronger, straighter; that he had become more polished in his looks and carriage. "Something of his old true-heartedness I miss, however," added he. "That, too, will soon appear again," said Wilhelm, "when we have recovered from our first astonishment."

The impression Werner made upon his friend was by no means so favourable. The honest man seemed rather to have retrograded than advanced. He was much leaner than of old; his peaked face appeared to have grown sharper, his nose longer; brow and crown had lost their hair; the voice, clear, eager, shrill, the hollow breast and stooping shoulders, the sallow cheeks, announced indubitably that a melancholic drudge was there.

Wilhelm was discreet enough to speak but sparingly of these great changes; while the other, on the contrary, gave free course to his friendly joy. "In truth," cried he, "if thou hast spent thy time badly, and, as I suppose, gained nothing, it must be owned thou art grown a piece of manhood such as cannot fail to turn to somewhat. Do not waste and squander me this, too, again: with such a figure thou shalt buy some rich and beautiful heiress." "I see," said Wilhelm, smiling, "thou wilt not belie thy character. Scarcely hast thou found thy brother after long absence, when thou lookest on him as a piece of goods, a thing to speculate on and make profit by."

Jarno and the abbé did not seem at all astonished at this recognition: they allowed the two to expatiate on the past and present as they pleased. Werner walked round and round his friend, turned him to this side and to that, so as almost to embarrass him. "No!" cried he, "such a thing as this I never met with, and yet I know that I am not mistaken. Thy eyes are deeper, thy brow is broader; thy nose has grown finer, thy mouth more lovely. Do but look at him, how he stands; how it all suits and fits together! Well, idling is the way to grow. But for me, poor devil," said he, looking at himself in the glass, "if I had not all this while been making store of money, it were over with me altogether."

Werner had got Wilhelm's last letter: the distant

trading-house, in common with which Lothario meant to purchase the estates, was theirs. On that business Werner had come hither, not dreaming that he should meet with Wilhelm on the way. The baron's lawyer came: the papers were produced; Werner reckoned the conditions reasonable. "If you mean well," said he, "as you seem to do, with this young man, you will of yourselves take care that our part be not abridged: it shall be at my friend's option whether he will take the land and lay out a portion of his fortune on it." Jarno and the abbé protested that they did not need this admonition. Scarcely had the business been discussed in general terms, when Werner signified a longing for a game at ombre; to which, in consequence, Jarno and the abbé set themselves along with him. He was now grown so accustomed to it, that he could not pass the evening without cards.

The two friends, after supper, being left alone, began to talk and question one another very keenly, touching everything they wished to have communicated. Wilhelm spoke in high terms of his situation, of his happiness in being received among such men. Werner shook his head, and said, "Well, I see, we should believe nothing that we do not see with our eyes. More than one obliging friend assured me thou wert living with a wild young nobleman, wert supplying him with actresses, helping him to waste his money; that, by thy means, he had quarrelled with every one of his relations." "For my own sake, and the sake of these worthy gentlemen, I should be vexed at this," said Wilhelm, "had not my theatrical experience made me tolerant to every sort of calumny. How can men judge rightly of our actions, which appear but singly or in fragments to them; of which they see the smallest portion; while good and bad take place in secret, and for most part nothing comes to light but an indifferent show? Are not the actors and actresses in

a play set up on boards before them; lamps are lit on every side; the whole transaction is comprised within three hours; yet scarcely one of them knows rightly what to make of it?"

Our friend proceeded to inquire about his family, his young comrades, his native town. Werner told, with great haste, of changes that had taken place, of changes that were still in progress. "The women in our house," said he, "are satisfied and happy: we are never short of money. One half of their time they spend in dressing, the other in showing themselves when dressed. They are as domestic as a reasonable man could wish. My boys are growing up to prudent youths. I already, as in vision, see them sitting, writing, reckoning, running, trading, trucking: each of them, as soon as possible, shall have a business of his own. As to what concerns our fortune, thou wilt be contented with the state of it. When we have got these lands in order, thou must come directly home with me; for it now appears as if thou, too, couldst mingle with some skill in worldly undertakings, thanks to thy new friends, who have set thee on the proper path. I am certainly a fool: I never knew till now how well I liked thee, — now when I cannot gape and gaze at thee enough, so well and handsome thou lookest. That is, in truth, another form than the portrait which was sent thy sister, which occasioned such disputes at home. Both mother and daughter thought young master very handsome indeed, with his slack collar, half-open breast, large ruff, sleek, pendent hair, round hat, short waistcoat, and wide pantaloons; while I, on the other hand, maintained that the costume was scarce two finger-breadths from that of harlequin. But now thou lookest like a man: only the cue is wanting, in which I beg of thee to bind thy hair; else, some time or other, they will seize thee as a Jew, and demand toll and tribute of thee."

Felix, in the meantime, had come into the room; and, as they did not mind him, he had laid himself upon the sofa, and was fallen asleep. "What urchin is this?" said Werner. Wilhelm at that moment had not the heart to tell the truth, nor did he wish to lay a still ambiguous narrative before a man who was by nature anything but credulous.

The whole party now proceeded to the lands, to view them, and conclude the bargain. Wilhelm would not part with Felix from his side: for the boy's sake, he rejoiced exceedingly in the intended purchase. The longing of the child for cherries and berries, the season for which was at hand, brought to his mind the days of his own youth, and the manifold duties of a father, to prepare, to procure, and to maintain for his family a constant series of enjoyments. With what interest he viewed the nurseries and the buildings! How zealously he contemplated repairing what had been neglected, restoring what had fallen! He no longer looked upon the world with the eyes of a bird of passage: an edifice he did not now consider as a grove that is hastily put together, and that withers ere one leaves it. Everything that he proposed commencing was to be completed for his boy: everything that he erected was to last for several generations. In this sense his apprenticeship was ended: with the feeling of a father, he had acquired all the virtues of a citizen. He felt this, and nothing could exceed his joy. "O needless strictness of morality!" exclaimed he, "while Nature in her own kindly manner trains us to all that we require to be. O strange demands of civil society! which first perplexes and misleads us, then asks of us more than Nature herself. Woe to every sort of culture which destroys the most effectual means of all true culture, and directs us to the end, instead of rendering us happy on the way!"

Much as he had already seen in his life, it seemed

as if the observation of the child afforded him his first clear view of human nature. The theatre, the world, had appeared before him, only as a multitude of thrown dice, every one of which upon its upper surface indicates a greater or a smaller value, and which, when reckoned up together, make a sum. But here in the person of the boy, as we might say, a single die was laid before him, on the many sides of which the worth and worthlessness of man's nature were legibly engraved.

The child's desire to have distinctions made in his ideas grew stronger every day. Having learned that things had names, he wished to hear the name of everything: supposing that there could be nothing which his father did not know, he often teased him with his questions, and caused him to inquire concerning objects which, but for this, he would have passed without notice. Our innate tendency to pry into the origin and end of things was likewise soon developed in the boy. When he asked whence came the wind, and whither went the flame, his father for the first time truly felt the limitation of his own powers, and wished to understand how far man may venture with his thoughts, and what things he may hope ever to give account of to himself or others. The anger of the child, when he saw injustice done to any living thing, was extremely grateful to the father, as the symptom of a generous heart. Felix once struck fiercely at the cook for cutting up some pigeons. The fine impression this produced on Wilhelm was, indeed, erelong disturbed, when he found the boy unmercifully tearing sparrows in pieces and beating frogs to death. This trait reminded him of many men, who appear so scrupulously just when without passion, and witnessing the proceedings of other men.

The pleasant feeling, that the boy was producing so fine and wholesome an influence on his being, was, in

a short time, troubled for a moment, when our friend observed, that in truth the boy was educating him more than he the boy. The child's conduct he was not qualified to correct: its mind he could not guide in any path but a spontaneous one. The evil habits which Aurelia had so violently striven against had all, as it seemed, on her death, assumed their ancient privileges. Felix still never shut the door behind him, he still would not eat from a plate; and no greater pleasure could befall him than when he happened to be overlooked, and could take his bit immediately from the dish, or let the full glass stand, and drink out of the bottle. He delighted also very much when he could set himself in a corner with a book, and say with a serious air, "I must study this scholar stuff!" though he neither knew his letters, nor would learn them.

Thus, when Wilhelm thought how little he had done for Felix, how little he was capable of doing, there arose at times a restlessness within him, which appeared to counterbalance all his happiness. "Are we men, then," said he, "so selfishly formed, that we cannot possibly take proper charge of any one without us? Am I not acting with the boy exactly as I did with Mignon? I drew the dear child toward me: her presence gave me pleasure, yet I cruelly neglected her. What did I do for her education, which she longed for with such earnestness? Nothing! I left her to herself, and to all the accidents to which, in a society of coarse people, she could be exposed. And now for this boy, who seemed so interesting before he could be precious to thee, has thy heart ever bid thee do the smallest service to him? It is time that thou shouldst cease to waste thy own years and those of others: awake, and think what thou shouldst do for thyself, and for this good being, whom love and nature have so firmly bound to thee."

This soliloquy was but an introduction to admit that

he had already thought and cared, and tried and chosen: he could delay no longer to confess it. After sorrow, often and in vain repeated, for the loss of Mariana, he distinctly felt that he must seek a mother for the boy; and also that he could not find one equal to Theresa. With this gifted lady he was thoroughly acquainted. Such a spouse and helpmate seemed the only one to trust one's self to in such circumstances. Her generous affection for Lothario did not make him hesitate. By a singular destiny, they two had been for ever parted: Theresa looked upon herself as free; she had talked of marrying, with indifference, indeed, but as of a matter understood.

After long deliberation he determined on communicating to her everything he knew about himself. She was to be made acquainted with him, as he already was with her. He accordingly began to take a survey of his history; but it seemed to him so empty of events, and in general so little to his credit, that he more than once was on the point of giving up his purpose. At last, however, he resolved on asking Jarno for the Roll of his Apprenticeship, which he had noticed lying in the tower: Jarno said it was the very time for that, and Wilhelm consequently got it.

It is a feeling of awe and fear which seizes on a man of noble mind when conscious that his character is just about to be exhibited before him. Every transition is a crisis, and a crisis presupposes sickness. With what reluctance do we look into the glass after rising from a sick-bed! The recovery we feel: the effects of the past disease are all we see. Wilhelm had, however, been sufficiently prepared: events had already spoken loudly to him, and his friends had not spared him. If he opened the roll of parchment with some hurry, he grew calmer and calmer the farther he read. He found his life delineated with large, sharp strokes; neither unconnected incidents, nor narrow sentiments,

perplexed his view; the most bland and general reflections taught, without shaming him. For the first time his own figure was presented to him, not, indeed, as in a mirror, a second self, but as in a portrait, another self: we do not, it is true, recognise ourselves in every feature; but we are delighted that a thinking spirit has so understood us, that such gifts have been employed in representing us, that an image of what we were exists, and may endure when we ourselves are gone.

Wilhelm next employed himself in settting forth the history of his life, for the perusal of Theresa: all the circumstances of it were recalled to memory by what he had been reading; he almost felt ashamed that to her great virtues he had nothing to oppose which indicated a judicious activity. He had been minute in his written narrative: he was brief in the letter which he sent along with it. He solicited her friendship, her love if it were possible: he offered her his hand, and entreated for a quick decision.

After some internal contest, whether it were proper to impart this weighty business to his friends, — to Jarno and the abbé, — he determined not to do so. His resolution was so firm, the business was of such importance, that he could not have submitted it to the decision of the wisest and best of men. He was even cautious enough to carry his letter with his own hand to the nearest post. From his parchment-roll it appeared with certainty enough, that in very many actions of his life, in which he had conceived himself to be proceeding freely and in secret, he had been observed, nay, guided; and perhaps the thought of this had given him an unpleasant feeling: and he wished at least, in speaking to Theresa's heart, to speak purely from the heart, — to owe his fate to her decision and determination only. Hence, in this solemn point, he scrupled not to give his overseers the slip.

CHAPTER II.

SCARCELY was the letter gone, when Lothario returned. Every one was gladdened at the prospect of so speedily concluding the important business which they had in hand. Wilhelm waited with anxiety to see how all these many threads were to be loosed, or tied anew, and how his own future state was to be settled. Lothario gave a kindly salutation to them all: he was quite recovered and serene; he had the air of one who knows what he should do, and who finds no hinderance in the way of doing it.

His cordial greeting Wilhelm could scarcely repay. "This," he had to own within himself, "is the friend, the lover, bridegroom, of Theresa: in his stead thou art presuming to intrude. Dost thou think it possible for thee to banish, to obliterate, an impression such as this?" Had the letter not been sent away, perhaps he would not have ventured sending it at all. But happily the die was cast: it might be, Theresa had already taken up her resolution, and only distance shrouded with its veil a happy termination. The winning or the losing must soon be decided. By such considerations he endeavoured to compose himself, and yet the movements of his heart were almost feverish. He could give but little attention to the weighty business, on which, in some degree, the fate of his whole property depended. In passionate moments how trivial do we reckon all that is about us, all that belongs to us!

Happily for him, Lothario treated the affair with

magnanimity, and Werner with an air of ease. The latter, in his violent desire of gain, experienced a lively pleasure in contemplating the fine estate which was to be his friend's. Lothario, for his part, seemed to be revolving very different thoughts. "I cannot take such pleasure in the acquirement of property," said he, "as in the justness of it."

"And, in the name of Heaven," cried Werner, "is not this of ours acquired justly?"

"Not altogether," said Lothario.

"Are we not giving hard cash for it?"

"Doubtless," replied Lothario; "and most probably you will consider what I am now hinting at as nothing but a whim. No property appears to me quite just, quite free of flaw, except it contribute to the state its due proportion."

"What!" said Werner. "You would rather that our lands, which we have purchased free from burden, had been taxable?"

"Yes," replied Lothario, "in a suitable degree. It is only by this equality with every other kind of property, that our possession of it can be made secure. In these new times, when so many old ideas are tottering, what is the grand reason why the peasant reckons the possession of the noble less equitable than his own? Simply that the noble is not burdened, and lies a burden on him."

"But how would the interest of our capital agree with that?" said Werner.

"Perfectly well," returned the other; "if the state, for a regular and fair contribution, would relieve us from the feudal hocus-pocus; would allow us to proceed with our lands according to our pleasure: so that we were not compelled to retain such masses of them undivided, so that we might part them more equally among our children, whom we might thus introduce to vigorous and free activity, instead of leaving them

the poor inheritance of these our limited and limiting privileges, to enjoy which we must ever be invoking the ghosts of our forefathers. How much happier were men and women in our rank of life, if they might, with unforbidden eyes, look around them, and elevate by their selection, here a worthy maiden, their a worthy youth, regarding nothing further than there own ideas of happiness in marriage! The state would have more, perhaps better citizens, and would not so often be distressed for want of heads and hands."

"I can assure you honestly," said Werner, "I never in my life thought about the state: my taxes, tolls, and tributes I have paid, because it was the custom."

"Still, however," said Lothario, "I hope to make a worthy patriot of you. As he alone is a good father who at table serves his children first, so is he alone a good citizen who, before all other outlays, discharges what he owes the state."

By such general reflections their special business was accelerated rather than retarded. It was nearly over, when Lothario said to Wilhelm, "I must send you to a place where you are needed more than here. My sister bids me beg of you to go to her as soon as possible. Poor Mignon seems to be decaying more and more, and it is thought your presence might allay the malady. Besides telling me in person, my sister has despatched this note after me: so that you perceive she reckons it a pressing case." Lothario handed him a billet. Wilhelm, who had listened in extreme perplexity, at once discovered in these hasty pencil-strokes the hand of the countess, and knew not what to answer.

"Take Felix with you," said Lothario: "the little ones will cheer each other. You must be upon the road to-morrow morning early: my sister's coach, in which my people travelled hither, is still here; I will

give you horses half the way, the rest you post. A prosperous journey to you! Make many compliments from me, when you arrive: tell my sister I shall soon be back, and that she must prepare for guests. Our granduncle's friend, the Marchese Cipriani, is on his way to visit us: he hoped to find the old man still in life; they meant to entertain each other with their common love of art, and the recollection of their early intimacy. The marchese, much younger than my uncle, owed to him the greater part of his accomplishments. We must exert all our endeavours to fill up, in some measure, the void which is awaiting him; and a larger party is the readiest means."

Lothario went with the abbé to his chamber; Jarno had ridden off before; Wilhelm hastened to his room. There was none to whom he could unbosom his distress, none by whose assistance he could turn aside the project, which he viewed with so much fear. The little servant came, requesting him to pack: they were to put the luggage on to-night, meaning to set out by daybreak. Wilhelm knew not what to do: at length he cried, "Well, I shall leave this house at any rate; on the road I may consider what is to be done; at all events, I will halt in the middle of my journey; I can send a message hither, I can write what I recoil from saying, then let come of it what will." In spite of this resolution, he spent a sleepless night: a look on Felix resting so serenely was the only thing that gave him any solace. "Oh, who knows," cried he, "what trials are before me! who knows how sharply bygone errors will yet punish me, how often good and reasonable projects for the future shall miscarry! But this treasure, which I call my own, continue it to me, thou exorable or inexorable Fate! Were it possible that this best part of myself were taken from me, that this heart could be torn from my heart, then farewell sense and understanding; farewell all care and fore-

sight; vanish thou tendency to perseverance! All that distinguishes us from the beasts, pass away! And, if it is not lawful for a man to end his heavy days by the act of his own hand, may speedy madness banish consciousness, before death, which destroys it for ever, shall bring on his own long night."

He seized the boy in his arms, kissed him, clasped him, and wetted him with plenteous tears.

The child awoke: his clear eye, his friendly look, touched his father to the inmost heart. "What a scene awaits me," cried he, "when I shall present thee to the beautiful, unhappy countess, when she shall press thee to her bosom, which thy father has so deeply injured! Ought I not to fear that she will push thee from her with a cry, when a touch of thee renews her real pain or fancied pain?" The coachman did not leave him time for further thought or hesitation, but forced him into the carriage before day. Wilhelm wrapped his Felix well; the morning was cold but clear: the child, for the first time in his life, saw the sun rise. His astonishment at the first fiery glance of the luminary, at the growing power of the light; his pleasure and his strange remarks, — rejoiced the father, and afforded him a glimpse into the heart of the boy, before which, as over a clear and silent sea, the sun was mounting and hovering.

In a little town the coachman halted, unyoked his horses, and rode back. Wilhelm took possession of a room, and asked himself seriously whether he would stay or proceed. Thus irresolute, he ventured to take out the little note, which hitherto he had never had the heart to look on: it contained the following words: "Send thy young friend very soon: Mignon for the last two days has been growing rather worse. Sad as the occasion is, I shall be happy to get acquainted with him."

The concluding words Wilhelm, at the first glance,

had not seen. He was terrified on reading them, and instantly determined not to go. "How?" cried he, "Lothario, knowing what occurred between us, has not told her who I am? She is not, with a settled mind, expecting an acquaintance, whom she would rather not see: she expects a stranger, — and I enter! I see her shudder and start back, I see her blush! No, it is impossible for me to encounter such a scene!" Just then his horses were led out and yoked: Wilhelm was determined to take off his luggage and remain. He felt extremely agitated. Hearing the maid running up-stairs to tell him, as he thought, that all was ready, he began on the spur of the instant to devise some pretext for continuing: his eyes were fixed, without attention, on the letter which he still held in his hand. "In the name of Heaven!" cried he, "what is this? It is not the hand of the countess: it is the hand of the Amazon!"

The maid came in, requested him to walk down, and took Felix with her. "Is it possible," exclaimed he, "is it true? What shall I do? Remain, and wait, and certify myself? Or hasten, hasten, and rush into an explanation? Thou art on the way to her, and thou canst loiter? This night thou mayest see her, and thou wilt voluntarily lock thyself in prison? It is her hand; yes, it is hers! This hand calls thee: her coach is yoked to lead thee to her! Now the riddle is explained: Lothario has two sisters; my relation to the one he knows, how much I owe to the other is unknown to him. Nor is she aware that the wounded stroller, who stands indebted to her for his health, if not his life, has been received with such unmerited attention in her brother's house."

Felix, who was swinging to and fro in the coach, cried up to him, "Father! come, oh, come! Look at the pretty clouds, the pretty colours!" "Yes, I come," cried Wilhelm, springing down-stairs; "and all the

glories of the sky, which thou, good creature, so admirest, are as nothing to the moment which I look for."

Sitting in the coach, he recalled all the circumstances of the matter to his memory. "So this is the Natalia, then, Theresa's friend! What a discovery! what hopes, what prospects! How strange that the fear of speaking about the one sister should have altogether concealed from me the existence of the other!" With what joy he looked on Felix! He anticipated for the child, as for himself, the best reception.

Evening at last came on; the sun had set; the road was not the best; the postilion drove slowly; Felix had fallen asleep, and new cares and doubts arose in the bosom of our friend. "What delusion, what fantasies, are these that rule thee!" said he to himself. "An uncertain similarity of handwriting has at once assured thee, and given thee matter for the strangest castles in the air." He again brought out the paper; in the departing light he again imagined that he recognised the hand of the countess: his eyes could no longer find in the parts what his heart had at once shown him in the whole. "These horses, then, are running with thee to a scene of terror! Who knows but in a few hours they may have to bring thee back again? And if thou shouldst meet with her alone! But perhaps her husband will be there, perhaps the baroness! How altered will she be! Shall I not fail, and sink to the earth, at sight of her?"

Yet a faint hope that it might be his Amazon would often gleam through these gloomy thoughts. It was now night: the carriage rolled into a courtyard, and halted; a servant with a link stepped out of a stately portal, and came down the broad steps to the carriage door. "You have been long looked for," said he, opening it. Wilhelm dismounted, took the sleeping Felix in his arms: the first servant called to a second, who

was standing in the door with a light, "Show the gentleman up to the baroness."

Quick as lightning, it went through Wilhelm's soul, "What a happiness! Be it by accident or of purpose, the baroness is here! I shall see her first: apparently the countess has retired to rest. Ye good spirits, grant that the moment of deepest perplexity may pass tolerably over!"

He entered the house: he found himself in the most earnest, and, as he almost felt, the holiest, place that he had ever trod. A pendent, dazzling lustre threw its light upon a broad and softly rising flight of stairs, which lay before him, and which parted into two divisions at a turn above. Marble statues and busts were standing upon pedestals, and arranged in niches: some of them seemed known to him. The impressions of our childhood abide with us, even in their minutest traces. He recognised a Muse, which had formerly belonged to his grandfather, not indeed by its form or worth, but by an arm which had been restored, and some new inserted pieces of the robe. He felt as if a fairy-tale had turned out to be true. The child was heavy in his arms: he lingered on the stairs, and knelt down, as if to place him more conveniently. His real want, however, was to get a moment's breathing time. He could scarcely raise himself again. The servant, who was carrying the light, offered to take Felix; but Wilhelm could not part with him. He had now mounted to an antechamber, in which, to his still greater astonishment, he observed the well-known picture of the sick king's son hanging on the wall. He had scarcely time to cast a look on it: the servant hurried him along through two rooms into a cabinet. Here, behind a light-screen, which threw a shadow on her, sat a young lady reading. "Oh, that it were she!" said he within himself at this decisive moment. He set down the boy, who seemed to be awakening; he

meant to approach the lady; but the child sank together, drunk with sleep; the lady rose and came to him. It was the Amazon! Unable to restrain himself, he fell upon his knee, and cried, "It is she!" He seized her hand, and kissed it with unbounded rapture. The child was lying on the carpet between them, sleeping softly.

Felix was carried to the sofa: Natalia sat down beside him; she directed Wilhelm to the chair which was standing nearest them. She proposed to order some refreshments; these our friend declined: he was altogether occupied convincing himself that it was she, closely examining her features, shaded by the screen, and accurately recognising them. She told him of Mignon's sickness, in general terms; that the poor child was gradually consuming under the influence of a few deep feelings; that with her extreme excitability, and her endeavouring to hide it, her little heart often suffered violent and dangerous pains; that, on any unexpected agitation of her mind, this primary organ of life would suddenly stop, and no trace of the vital movement could be felt in the good child's bosom; that, when such an agonising cramp was past, the force of nature would again express itself in strong pulses, and now torment the child by its excess, as she had before suffered by its defect.

Wilhelm recollected one spasmodic scene of that description; and Natalia referred him to the doctor, who would speak with him at large on the affair, and explain more circumstantially why he, the friend and benefactor of the child, had been at present sent for. "One curious change," Natalia added, "you will find in her: she now wears women's clothes, to which she had once such an aversion."

"How did you succeed in this?" said Wilhelm.

"If it was, indeed, a thing to be desired," said she, "we owe it all to chance. Hear how it happened.

Perhaps you are aware that I have constantly about me a number of little girls, whose opening minds I endeavour, as they grow in strength, to train to what is good and right. From my mouth they learn nothing but what I myself regard as true; yet I cannot and would not hinder them from gathering, among other people, many fragments of the common prejudices and errors which are current in the world. If they inquire of me about them, I attempt, as far as possible, to join these alien and intrusive notions to some just one, and thus to render them, if not useful, at least harmless. Some time ago my girls had heard, among the peasants' children, many tales of angels, of Knecht Rupert, and such shadowy characters, who, they understood, appeared at certain times in person, to give presents to good children, and to punish naughty ones. They had an idea that these strange visitants were people in disguise; in this I confirmed them: and, without entering into explanations, I determined, on the first opportunity, to let them see a spectacle of that sort. It chanced that the birthday of two twin sisters, whose behaviour had been always very good, was near: I promised, that, on this occasion, the little present they had so well deserved should be delivered to them by an angel. They were on the stretch of curiosity regarding this phenomenon. I had chosen Mignon for the part; and accordingly, at the appointed day, I had her suitably equipped in a long, light, snow-white dress. She was, of course, provided with a golden girdle around her waist, and a golden fillet on her hair. I at first proposed to omit the wings; but the young ladies who were decking her insisted on a pair of large golden pinions, in preparing which they meant to show their highest art. Thus did the strange apparition, with a lily in the one hand, and a little basket in the other, glide in among the girls: she surprised even me. 'There comes the angel!' said I. The children all shrank back: at last they cried,

'It is Mignon!' yet they durst not venture to approach the wondrous figure.

"'Here are your gifts,' said she, putting down the basket. They gathered around her, they viewed, they felt, they questioned her.

"'Art thou an angel?' asked one of them.

"'I wish I were,' said Mignon.

"'Why dost thou bear a lily?'

"'So pure and so open should my heart be: then were I happy.'

"'What wings are these? Let us see them?'

"'They represent far finer ones, which are not yet unfolded.'

"And thus significantly did she answer all their other childlike, innocent inquiries. The little party having satisfied their curiosity, and the impression of the show beginning to abate, we were for proceeding to undress the little angel. This, however, she resisted: she took her cithern; she seated herself here, on this high writing-table, and sang a little song with touching grace:

"'Such let me seem, till such I be:
Take not my snow-white dress away!
Soon from this dusk of earth I flee
Up to the glittering lands of day.

"'There first a little space I rest,
Then wake so glad, to scenes so kind:
In earthly robes no longer drest,
This band, this girdle, left behind.

"'And those calm, shining sons of morn,
They ask not who is maid or boy:
No robes, no garments, there are worn;
Our body pure from sin's alloy.

"'Through little life not much I toiled,
Yet anguish long this heart has wrung;
Untimely woe my blossom spoiled:
Make me again for ever young.'

"I immediately determined upon leaving her the dress," proceeded Natalia, "and procuring her some others of a similar kind. These she now wears; and in them, I think, her form has quite a different expression."

As it was already late, Natalia let the stranger go: he parted from her not without anxiety. "Is she married or not?" asked he within himself. He had been afraid, at every rustling, that the door would open, and her husband enter. The serving-man, who showed him to his room, went off before our friend had mustered resolution to inquire regarding this. His unrest held him long awake: he kept comparing the figure of the Amazon with the figure of his new acquaintance. The two would not combine: the former he had, as it were, himself fashioned; the latter seemed as if it would almost new-fashion *him*.

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning, while all was yet quiet, he went about viewing the house. It was the purest, finest, stateliest piece of architecture he had ever seen. "True art," cried he, "is like good company: it constrains us in the most delightful way to recognise the measure by which, and up to which, our inward nature has been shaped by culture." The impression which the busts and statues of his grandfather made upon him was exceedingly agreeable. With a longing mind he hastened to the picture of the sick king's son, and he still felt it to be charming and affecting. The servant opened to him various other chambers: he found a library, a museum, a cabinet of philosophical instruments. In much of this he could not help perceiving his extreme ignorance. Meanwhile Felix had awakened, and come running after him. The thought of how and when he might receive Theresa's letter gave him pain: he dreaded seeing Mignon, and in some degree Natalia. How unlike his present state was his state at the moment when he sealed the letter to Theresa, and with a glad heart wholly gave himself to that noble being!

Natalia sent for him to breakfast. He proceeded to a room where several tidy little girls, all apparently below ten years, were occupied in furnishing a table; while another of the same appearance brought in various sorts of beverage.

Wilhelm cast his eye upon a picture hung above the sofa: he could not but recognise in it the portrait of Natalia, little as the execution satisfied him. Natalia

entered, and the likeness seemed entirely to vanish. To his comfort, it was painted with the cross of a religious order on its breast; and he now saw another such upon Natalia's.

"I have just been looking at the portrait here," said he; "and it seems surprising that a painter could have been at once so true and so false. The picture resembles you, in general, extremely well; and yet it neither has your features nor your character."

"It is rather matter of surprise," replied Natalia, "that the likeness is so good. It is not my picture, but the picture of an aunt, whom I resembled even in childhood, though she was then advanced in years. It was painted when her age was just about what mine is: at the first glance, every one imagines it is meant for me. You should have been acquainted with that excellent lady. I owe her much. A very weak state of health, perhaps too much employment with her own thoughts, and, withal, a moral and religious scrupulosity, prevented her from being to the world what, in other circumstances, she might have become. She was a light that shone but on a few friends, and on me especially."

"Can it be possible," said Wilhelm, after thinking for a moment, while so many circumstances seemed to correspond so well, "can it be possible that the fair and noble Saint, whose meek confessions I had liberty to study, was your aunt?"

"You read the manuscript?" inquired Natalia.

"Yes," said Wilhelm, "with the greatest sympathy, and not without effect upon my life. What most impressed me in this paper was, if I may term it so, the purity of being, not only of the writer herself, but of all that lay around her; that self-dependence of nature, that impossibility of admitting anything into her soul which would not harmonise with its own noble, lovely tone."

"You are more tolerant to this fine spirit," said Natalia, "nay, I will say more just, than many other men to whom the narrative has been imparted. Every cultivated person knows how much he has to strive against a certain coarseness, both in himself and others; how much his culture costs him; how apt he is, after all, in certain cases, to recollect himself alone, forgetting what he owes to others. How often has a worthy person to reproach himself for having failed to act with proper delicacy! And when a fair nature too delicately, too conscientiously, cultivates, nay, if you will, overcultivates, itself, there seems to be no toleration, no indulgence, for it in the world. Yet such persons are, without us, what the ideal of perfection is within us, — models, not for being imitated, but for being aimed at. We laugh at the cleanliness of the Dutch; but would our friend Theresa be what she is, if some such notion were not always present to her in her housekeeping?"

"I see before me, then," cried Wilhelm, "in Theresa's friend, the same Natalia whom her amiable relative was so attached to; the Natalia, who, from her youth, was so affectionate, so sympathising, and helpful! It was only out of such a line that such a being could proceed. What a prospect opens before me, while I at once survey your ancestors, and all the circle you belong to!"

"Yes," replied Natalia, "in a certain sense, the story of my aunt would give you the faithfullest picture of us. Her love to me, indeed, has made her praise the little girl too much: in speaking of a child, we never speak of what is present, but of what we hope for."

Wilhelm, in the meantime, was rapidly reflecting that Lothario's parentage and early youth were now likewise known to him. The fair countess, too, appeared before him in her childhood, with the aunt's

pearls about her neck: he himself had been near those pearls, when her soft, lovely lips bent down to meet his own. These beautiful remembrances he sought to drive away by other thoughts. He ran through the characters to whom that manuscript had introduced him. "I am here, then," cried he, "in your worthy uncle's house! It is no house, it is a temple; and you are the priestess, nay, the genius, of it: I shall recollect for life my impression yesternight, when I entered, and the old figures of my earliest days were again before me. I thought of the compassionate marble statues in Mignon's song: but these figures had not to lament about me; they looked upon me with a lofty earnestness, they brought my first years into immediate contact with the present moment. That ancient treasure of our family, the joy of my grandfather, I find here placed among so many other noble works of art; and myself, whom nature made the darling of the good old man, my unworthy self I find here also, heavens! in what society, in what connections!"

The girls had, by degrees, gone out to mind their little occupations. Natalia, left alone with Wilhelm, asked some further explanation of his last remark. The discovery, that a number of her finest paintings and statues had at one time been the property of Wilhelm's grandfather, did not fail to give a cheerful stimulus to their discourse. As by that manuscript he had got acquainted with Natalia's house; so now he found himself too, as it were, in his inheritance. At length he asked for Mignon. His friend desired him to have patience till the doctor, who had been called out into the neighbourhood, returned. It is easy to suppose that the doctor was the same little, active man whom we already know, and who was spoken of in the "Confessions of a Fair Saint."

"Since I am now," said Wilhelm, "in the middle

of your family circle, I presume the abbé whom that paper mentions is the strange, inexplicable person whom, after the most singular series of events, I met with in your brother's house? Perhaps you can give some more accurate conception of him?"

"Of the abbé there might much be said," replied Natalia: "what I know best about him, is the influence which he exerted on our education. He was, for a time at least, convinced that education ought, in every case, to be adapted to the inclinations: his present views of it I know not. He maintained, that with man the first and last consideration was activity, and that we could not act on anything without the proper gifts for it, without an instinct impelling us to it. 'You admit,' he used to say, 'that poets must be born such; you admit this with regard to all professors of the fine arts; because you must admit it, because those workings of human nature cannot very plausibly be aped. But, if we consider well, we shall find that every capability, however slight, is born with us; that there is no vague, general capability in men. It is our ambiguous, desultory education that makes men uncertain; it awakens wishes when it should be animating tendencies; instead of forwarding our real capacities, it turns our efforts toward objects which are frequently discordant with the mind that aims at them. I augur better of a child, a youth, who is wandering astray on a path of his own, than of many who are walking aright upon paths which are not theirs. If the former, either by themselves or by the guidance of others, ever find the right path, that is to say, the path which suits their nature, they will never leave it; while the latter are in danger every moment of shaking off a foreign yoke, and abandoning themselves to unrestricted license.'"

"It is strange," said Wilhelm, "that this same extraordinary man should likewise have taken charge

of me; should, as it seems, have, in his own fashion, if not led, at least confirmed, me in my errors, for a time. How he will answer to the charge of having joined with others, as it were, to make game of me, I wait patiently to see."

"Of this whim, if it is one," said Natalia, "I have little reason to complain: of all the family I answered best with it. Indeed, I see not how Lothario could have got a finer breeding: but for my sister, the countess, some other treatment might have suited better: perhaps they should have studied to infuse more earnestness and strength into her nature. As to brother Friedrich, what is to become of him cannot be conjectured: he will fall a sacrifice, I fear, to this experiment in pedagogy."

"You have another brother, then?" cried Wilhelm.

"Yes," replied Natalia: "and a light, merry youth he is; and, as they have not hindered him from roaming up and down the world, I know not what the wild, dissipated boy will turn to. It is a great while since I saw him. The only thing which calms my fears is, that the abbé, and the whole society about my brother, are receiving constant notice where he is and what he does."

Wilhelm was about to ask Natalia her opinion more precisely on the abbé's paradoxes, as well as to solicit information about that mysterious society; but the physician entering changed their conversation. After the first compliments of welcome, he began to speak of Mignon.

Natalia then took Felix by the hand; saying she would lead the child to Mignon, and prepare her for the entrance of her friend.

The doctor, now alone with Wilhelm, thus proceeded: "I have wondrous things to tell you, such as you are not anticipating. Natalia has retired, that we might speak with greater liberty of certain matters,

which, although I first learned them by her means, her presence would prevent us from discussing freely. The strange temper of the child seems to consist almost exclusively of deep longing: the desire of revisiting her native land, and the desire for you, my friend, are, I might almost say, the only earthly things about her. Both these feelings do but grasp toward an immeasurable distance, both objects lie before her unattainable. The neighbourhood of Milan seems to be her home: in very early childhood she was kidnapped from her parents by a company of rope-dancers. A more distinct account we cannot get from her, partly because she was then too young to recollect the names of men and places, but especially because she made an oath to tell no living mortal her abode and parentage. For the strolling-party, who came up with her when she had lost her way, and to whom she so accurately described her dwelling, with such piercing entreaties to conduct her home, but carried her along with them the faster; and at night in their quarters, when they thought the child was sleeping, joked about their precious capture, declaring she would never find the way home again. On this a horrid desperation fell upon the miserable creature; but at last the Holy Virgin rose before her eyes, and promised that she would assist her. The child then swore within herself a sacred oath, that she would henceforth trust no human creature, would disclose her history to no one, but live and die in hope of immediate aid from heaven. Even this, which I am telling you, Natalia did not learn expressly from her, but gathered it from detached expressions, songs, and childlike inadvertencies, betraying what they meant to hide.

Wilhelm called to memory many a song and word of this dear child, which he could now explain. He earnestly requested the physician to keep from him

none of the confessions or mysterious poetry of this peculiar being.

"Prepare yourself," said the physician, "for a strange confession; for a story with which you, without remembering it, have much to do, and which, as I greatly fear, has been decisive for the death and life of this good creature."

"Let me hear," said Wilhelm: "my impatience is unbounded."

"Do you recollect a secret nightly visit from a female," said the doctor, "after your appearance in the character of Hamlet?"

"Yes, I recollect it well," cried Wilhelm, blushing; "but I did not look to be reminded of it at the present moment."

"Do you know who it was?"

"I do not! You frighten me! In the name of Heaven, not Mignon, surely? Who was it? Tell me, pray."

"I know it not myself."

"Not Mignon, then?"

"No, certainly not Mignon; but Mignon was intending at the time to glide in to you, and saw with horror, from a corner where she lay concealed, a rival get before her."

"A rival!" cried our friend. "Speak on: you more and more confound me."

"Be thankful," said the doctor, "that you can arrive at the result so soon through means of me. Natalia and I, with but a distant interest in the matter, had distress enough to undergo before we could thus far discover the perplexed condition of the poor, dear creature, whom we wished to help. By some wanton speeches of Philina and the other girls, by a certain song which she had heard Philina sing, the child's attention had been roused: she longed to pass a night beside the man she loved, without conceiving anything

to be implied in this beyond a happy and confiding rest. A love for you, my friend, was already keen and powerful in her little heart; in your arms, the child had found repose from many a sorrow; she now desired this happiness in all its fulness. If at one time she purposed requesting it as a favour, at another a secret horror would hold her back. At last that merry night and the excitement of abundant wine inspired her with the courage to attempt the adventure, and glide in to you on that occasion. Accordingly she ran before, to hide herself in your apartment, which was standing open; but just when she had reached the top of the stairs, having heard a rustling, she concealed herself, and saw a female in a white dress slip into your chamber. You yourself arrived soon after, and she heard you push the large bolt.

"Mignon's agony was now unutterable: all the violent feelings of a passionate jealousy mingled themselves with the unacknowledged longing of obscure desire, and seized her half-developed nature with tremendous force. Her heart, which hitherto had beaten violently with eagerness and expectation, now at once began to falter and stop; it pressed her bosom like a heap of lead: she could not draw her breath, she knew not what to do; she heard the sound of the old man's harp, hastened to the garret where he was, and passed the night at his feet in horrible convulsions."

The physician paused a moment: then, as Wilhelm still kept silence, he proceeded, "Natalia told me, nothing in her life had so alarmed and touched her as the state of Mignon while relating this; indeed, our noble friend accused herself of cruelty in having, by her questions and management, drawn this confession from her, and renewed by recollection the violent sorrows of the poor little girl.

"'The dear creature,' said Natalia, 'had scarcely

come so far with her recital, or, rather, with her answers to my questions, when she sank all at once before me on the ground, and, with her hand on her bosom, piteously moaned that the pain of that excruciating night was come back. She twisted herself like a worm upon the floor; and I had to summon all my composure, that I might remember and apply such means of remedy for mind and body as were known to me.'"

"It is a painful predicament you put me in," cried Wilhelm, "by impressing me so vividly with the feeling of my manifold injustice toward this unhappy and beloved being, at the very moment when I am again to meet her. If she is to see me, why do you deprive me of the courage to appear with freedom? And shall I confess it to you? Since her mind is so affected, I perceive not how my presence can be advantageous to her. If you, as a physician, are persuaded that this double longing has so undermined her being as to threaten death, why should I renew her sorrows by my presence, and perhaps accelerate her end?"

"My friend," replied the doctor, "where we cannot cure, it is our duty to alleviate; and how much the presence of a loved object tends to take from the imagination its destructive power, how it changes an impetuous longing to a peaceful looking, I could prove by the most convincing instances. Everything in measure and with purpose! For, in other cases, this same presence may rekindle an affection nigh extinguished. But do you go and see the child; behave to her with kindness, and let us wait the consequence."

Natalia, at this moment coming back, bade Wilhelm follow her to Mignon. "She appears to feel quite happy with the boy," observed Natalia, "and I hope she will receive our friend with mildness." Wilhelm followed, not without reluctance: he was deeply moved

by what he had been hearing; he feared a stormy scene of passion. It was altogether the reverse that happened on his entrance.

Mignon, dressed in long, white, women's clothes, with her brown, copious hair partly knotted, partly clustering out in locks, was sitting with the boy Felix on her lap, and pressing him against her heart. She looked like a departed spirit, he like life itself: it seemed as if Heaven and Earth were clasping one another. She held out her hand to Wilhelm with a smile, and said, "I thank thee for bringing back the child to me: they had taken him away, I know not how; and since then I could not live. So long as my heart needs anything on earth, thy Felix shall fill up the void."

The quietness which Mignon had displayed on meeting with her friend produced no little satisfaction in the party. The doctor signified that Wilhelm should go frequently and see her; that in body as in mind, she should be kept as equable as possible. He himself departed, promising to return soon.

Wilhelm could now observe Natalia in her own circle: one would have desired nothing better than to live beside her. Her presence had the purest influence on the girls, and young ladies of various ages, who resided with her in the house, or came to pay her visits from the neighbourhood.

"The progress of your life," said Wilhelm once to her, "must always have been very even: your aunt's delineation of you in your childhood seems, if I mistake not, still to fit. It is easy to see that you never were entangled in your path. You have never been compelled to retrograde."

"This I owe to my uncle and the abbé," said Natalia, "who so well discriminated my prevailing turn of mind. From my youth upward, I can recollect no livelier feeling than that I was constantly observing people's wants, and had an irresistible desire to make them up.

The child that had not learned to stand on its feet, the old man that could no longer stand on his; the longing of a rich family for children, the inability of a poor one to maintain their children; each silent wish for some particular species of employment; the impulse toward any talent; the natural gifts for many little necessary arts of life, — were sure to strike me: my eyes seemed formed by nature for detecting them. I saw such things where no one had directed my attention: I seemed born for seeing them alone. The charms of inanimate nature, to which so many persons are exceedingly susceptible, had no effect on me: the charms of art, if possible, had less. My most delightful occupation was and is, when a deficiency, a want, appeared before me anywhere, to set about devising a supply, a remedy, a help for it.

"If I saw a poor creature in rags, the superfluous clothes I had noticed hanging in the wardrobes of my friends immediately occurred to me; if I saw children wasting for want of care, I was sure to recollect some lady I had found oppressed with tedium amid riches and conveniences; if I saw too many persons crammed into a narrow space, I thought they should be lodged in the spacious chambers of palaces and vacant houses. This mode of viewing things was altogether natural, without the least reflection: so that in my childhood I often made the strangest work of it, and more than once embarrassed people by my singular proposals. Another of my peculiarities was this: I did not learn till late, and after many efforts, to consider money as a means of satisfying wants; my benefits were all distributed in kind: and my simplicity, I know, was frequently the cause of laughter. None but the abbé seemed to understand me: he met me everywhere; he made me acquainted with myself, with these wishes, these tendencies, and taught me how to satisfy them suitably."

"Do you, then," said Wilhelm, "in the education of your little female world, employ the method of these extraordinary men? Do you, too, leave every mind to form itself? Do you, too, leave your girls to search and wander, to pursue delusions, happily to reach the goal, or miserably lose themselves in error?"

"No," replied Natalia: "such treatment as that would altogether contradict my notions. To my mind, he who does not help us at the needful moment, never helps; he who does not counsel at the needful moment, never counsels. I also reckon it essential, that we lay down and continually impress on children certain laws, to operate as a kind of hold in life. Nay, I could almost venture to assert, that it is better to be wrong by rule, than to be wrong with nothing but the fitful caprices of our disposition to impel us hither and thither; and, in my way of viewing men, there always seems to be a void in their nature which cannot be filled up, except by some decisive and distinctly settled law."

"Your manner of proceeding, then," said Wilhelm, "is entirely different from the manner of our friends?"

"Yes," replied Natalia; "and you may see the unexampled tolerance of these men, from the fact, that they nowise disturb me in my practice, but leave me on my own path, simply because it is my own, and even assist me in everything that I require of them."

A more minute description of Natalia's plans in managing her children we reserve for some other opportunity.

Mignon often asked to be of their society; and this they granted her with greater readiness, as she appeared to be again accustoming herself to Wilhelm, to be opening her heart to him, and in general to have become more cheerful, and contented with existence.

In walking, being easily fatigued, she liked to hang upon his arm. "Mignon," she would say, "now climbs and bounds no more; yet she still longs to mount the summits of the hills, to skip from house to house, from tree to tree. How enviable are the birds! and then so prettily and socially they build their nests, too!"

Erelong it became habitual for her to invite her friend, more than once every day, into the garden. When Wilhelm was engaged or absent, Felix had to take his place; and, if poor Mignon seemed at times quite loosened from the earth, there were other moments when she would again hold fast to father and son, and seem to dread a separation from them more than anything beside.

Natalia wore a thoughtful look. "We meant," said she, "to open her tender little heart, by sending for you hither. I know not whether we did prudently." She stopped, and seemed expecting Wilhelm to say something. To him also it occurred, that, by his marriage with Theresa, Mignon, in the present circumstances, would be fearfully offended: but, in his uncertainty, he did not venture mentioning his project; he had no suspicion that Natalia knew of it.

As little could he talk with freedom, when his noble friend began to speak about her sister, to praise her good qualities, and to lament her hapless situation. He felt exceedingly embarrassed when Natalia told him he would shortly see the countess here. "Her husband," said she, "has now no object but replacing Zinzendorf in the Community, and, by insight and activity, supporting and extending that establishment. He is coming with his wife, to take a sort of leave: he then purposes visiting the various spots where the Community have settled. They appeared to treat him as he wishes: and I should not wonder if, in order to be altogether like his predecessor, he ventured, with

my sister, on a voyage to America; for, being already well-nigh convinced that a little more would make a saint of him, the wish to superadd the dignity of martyrdom has probably enough often flitted through his mind."

CHAPTER IV.

THEY had often spoken of Theresa, often mentioned her in passing; and Wilhelm almost every time was minded to confess that he had offered her his heart and hand. A certain feeling, which he was not able to explain, restrained him: he paused and wavered, till at length Natalia, with the heavenly, modest, cheerful smile she often wore, said to him, "It seems, then, I at last must break silence, and force myself into your confidence! Why, my friend, do you keep secret from me an affair of such importance to yourself, and so closely touching my concerns? You have made my friend the offer of your hand: I do not mix uncalled in the transaction; here are my credentials; here is the letter which she writes to you, which she sends you through my hands."

"A letter from Theresa!" cried he.

"Yes, mein Herr! Your destiny is settled: you are happy. Let me congratulate my friend and you on your good fortune."

Wilhelm spoke not, but gazed out before him. Natalia looked at him; she saw that he was pale. "Your joy is strong," continued she: "it takes the form of terror, it deprives you of the power to speak. My participation is not the less cordial that I show it you in words. I hope you will be grateful, for I may say my influence on the decision of your bride has not been small: she asked me for advice; and as it happened, by a singular coincidence, that you were here just then, I was enabled to destroy the few scruples

she still entertained. Our messages went swiftly to and fro: here is her determination; here is the conclusion of the treaty! And now you shall read her other letters: you shall have a free, clear look into the fair heart of your Theresa."

Wilhelm opened the letter, which she handed him unsealed. It contained these friendly words:

"I am yours, as I am and as you know me. I call you mine, as you are and as I know you. What in ourselves, what in our connection, wedlock changes, we shall study to adjust by reason, cheerfulness, and mutual good will. As it is no passion, but trust and inclination, for each other that is leading us together, we run less risk than thousands of others. You will forgive me, will you not, if I still think often and kindly of my former friend: in return, I will press your Felix to my heart, as if I were his mother. If you choose to share my little mansion straightway, we are lord and master there; and in the meanwhile the purchase of your land might be concluded. I could wish that no new arrangements were made in it without me. I could wish at once to prove that I deserve the confidence you repose in me. Adieu, dear, dear friend! Beloved bridegroom, honoured husband! Theresa clasps you to her breast with hope and joy. My friend will tell you more, will tell you all."

Wilhelm, to whose mind this sheet recalled the image of Theresa with the liveliest distinctness, had now recovered his composure. While reading, thoughts had rapidly alternated within his soul. With terror he discovered in his heart the most vivid traces of an inclination to Natalia: he blamed himself, declaring every thought of that description to be madness; he represented to himself Theresa in her whole perfection: he again perused the letter, he grew cheerful, or, rather, he so far regained his self-possession that he could appear cheerful. Natalia handed him the letters

which had passed between Theresa and herself: out of Theresa's we propose extracting one or two passages.

After delineating her bridegroom in her own peculiar way, Theresa thus proceeded:

"Such is the notion I have formed of the man who now offers me his hand. What he thinks of himself, thou shalt see by and by in the papers he has sent me, where he altogether candidly draws his own portrait: I feel persuaded that I shall be happy with him."

"As for rank, thou knowest what my ideas have always been on this point. Some people look on disagreement of external circumstances as a fearful thing, and cannot remedy it. I wish not to persuade any one, I wish to act according to my own persuasion. I mean not to set others an example, nor do I act without example. It is interior disagreements only that frighten me: a frame that does not fit what it is meant to hold, much pomp and little real enjoyment, wealth and avarice, nobility and coarseness, youth and pedantry, poverty and ceremonies, these are the things which would annihilate me, however it may please the world to stamp and rate them."

"If I hope that we shall suit each other, the hope is chiefly founded upon this, that he resembles thee, my dear Natalia, thee whom I so highly prize and reverence. Yes: he has thy noble searching and striving for the better, whereby we of ourselves produce the good which we suppose we find. How often have I blamed thee, not in silence, for treating this or that person, for acting in this or that case, otherwise than I should have done; and yet, in general, the issue showed that thou wert right. 'When we take people,' thou wouldst say, 'merely as they are, we make them

worse: when we treat them as if they were what they should be, we improve them as far as they can be improved.' To see or to act thus, I know full well is not for me. Skill, order, discipline, direction, that is my affair. I always recollect what Jarno said: 'Theresa trains her pupils, Natalia forms them.' Nay, once he went so far as to assert that of the three fair qualities, faith, love, and hope, I was entirely destitute. 'Instead of faith,' said he, 'she has penetration; instead of love, she has steadfastness; instead of hope, she has trust.' Indeed, I will confess, that, till I knew thee, I knew nothing higher in the world than clearness and prudence; it was thy presence only that persuaded, animated, conquered me; to thy fair, lofty soul I willingly give place. My friend, too, I honour on the same principle: the description of his life is a perpetual seeking without finding, — not empty seeking, but wondrous, generous seeking; he fancies others may give him what can proceed from himself alone. So, love, the clearness of my vision has not injured me on this occasion more than others: I know my husband better than he knows himself, and I value him the more. I see him, yet I see not over him: all my skill will not enable me to judge of what he can accomplish. When I think of him, his image always blends itself with thine: I know not how I have deserved to belong to two such persons. But I will deserve it, by endeavouring to do my duty by fulfilling what is looked for from me."

"If I recollect of Lothario? Vividly and daily. In the company which in thought surrounds me, I cannot want him for a moment. Oh, what a pity for this noble character, related by an error of his youth to me, that nature has related him to thee! A being such as thou, in truth, were worthier of him than I. To thee I could, I would surrender him. Let us be to him all

we can, till he find a proper wife; and then, too, let us be, let us abide, together."

"But what shall we say to our friends?" began Natalia. "Your brother does not know of it?"— "Not a hint; your people know as little; we women have, on this occasion, managed the affair ourselves. Lydia had put some whims into Theresa's head concerning Jarno and the abbé. There are certain plans and secret combinations, with the general scheme of which I am acquainted, and into which I never thought of penetrating farther. With regard to these, Theresa has, through Lydia, taken up some shadow of suspicion: so in this decisive step she would not suffer any one but me to influence her. With my brother it had been already settled that they should merely announce their marriages to one another, not giving or asking counsel on the subject."

Natalia wrote a letter to her brother: she invited Wilhelm to subjoin a word or two, Theresa having so desired it. They were just about to seal, when Jarno unexpectedly sent up his name. His reception was, of course, as kind as possible: he wore a sportful, merry air; he could not long forbear to tell his errand. "I am come," said he, "to give you very curious and very pleasing tidings: they concern Theresa. You have often blamed us, fair Natalia, for troubling our heads about so many things; but now you see how good it is to have one's spies in every place. Guess, and let us see your skill for once!"

The self-complacency with which he spoke these words, the roguish mien with which he looked at Wilhelm and Natalia, persuaded both of them that he had found their secret. Natalia answered, smiling, "We are far more skilful than you think: before we even heard your riddle, we had put the answer to it down in black and white."

With these words she handed him the letter to Lothario, satisfied at having met, in this way, the little triumph and surprise he had meant for them. Jarno took the sheet with some astonishment, ran it quickly over, started, let it drop from his hands, and stared at both his friends with an expression of amazement, nay, of fright, which, on his countenance, was rare. He spoke no word.

Wilhelm and Natalia were not a little struck: Jarno stepped up and down the room. "What shall I say?" cried he, "or shall I say it all? But it must come out: the perplexity is not to be avoided. So secret for secret, surprise against surprise! Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother! The hinderance is removed: I came to ask you to prepare her for a marriage with Lothario."

Jarno saw the shock which he had given his friends: they cast their eyes upon the ground. "The present case," said he, "is one of those which are worse to bear in company. What each has to consider in it, he considers best in solitude: I, at least, require an hour of leave." He hastened to the garden: Wilhelm followed him mechanically, yet without approaching near.

At the end of an hour they were again assembled. Wilhelm opened the conversation. "Formerly," said he, "while I was living without plan or object, in a state of carelessness, or, I may say, of levity, friendship, love, affection, trust, came toward me with open arms, they pressed themselves upon me; but now, when I am serious, destiny appears to take another course with me. This resolution, of soliciting Theresa's hand, is probably the first that has proceeded altogether from myself. I laid my plan considerately; my reason fully joined in it: by the consent of that noble maiden, all my hopes were crowned. But now the strangest fate puts back my outstretched hand: Theresa reaches hers to me, but from afar, as in a dream; I cannot

grasp it, and the lovely image leaves me for ever. So fare thee well, thou lovely image! and all ye images of richest happiness that gathered round it!"

He was silent for a moment, looking out before him: Jarno was about to speak. "Let me have another word," cried Wilhelm, "for the lot is drawing which is to decide the destiny of all my life. At this moment, I am aided and confirmed by the impression which Lothario's presence made upon me at the first glance, and which has ever since continued with me. That man well merits every sort of friendship and affection; and, without sacrifices, friendship cannot be imagined. For his sake, it was easy for me to delude a hapless girl; for his sake, it shall be possible for me to give away the worthiest bride. Return, relate the strange occurrence to him, and tell him what I am prepared for."

"In emergencies like this," said Jarno, "I hold that everything is done, if one do nothing rashly. Let us take no step till Lothario has agreed to it. I will go to him: wait patiently for my return or for his letter."

He rode away, and left his friends in great disquiet. They had time to reconsider these events, to think of them maturely. It now first occurred to them, that they had taken Jarno's statement simply by itself, and without inquiring into any of the circumstances. Wilhelm was not altogether free from doubts; but next day their astonishment, nay, their bewilderment, arose still higher, when a messenger, arriving from Theresa, brought the following letter to Natalia.

"Strange as it may seem, after all the letters I have sent, I am obliged to send another, begging that thou wouldst despatch my bridegroom to me instantly. He shall be my husband, what plans soever they may lay to rob me of him. Give him the enclosed letter, only not before witnesses, whoever they may be!"

The enclosed letter was as follows: "What opinion

will you form of your Theresa, when you see her all at once insisting passionately on a union which calm reason alone appeared to have appointed? Let nothing hinder you from setting out the moment you have read this letter. Come, my dear, dear friend; now three times dearer, since they are attempting to deprive me of you."

"What is to be done?" cried Wilhelm, after he had read the letter.

"In no case that I remember," said Natalia, after some reflection, "have my heart and judgment been so dumb as in this: what to do or to advise I know not."

"Can it be," cried Wilhelm, vehemently, "that Lothario does not know of it? or, if he does, that he is but like us, the sport of hidden plans? Has Jarno, when he saw our letter, devised that fable on the spot? Would he have told us something different, if we had not been so precipitate? What can they mean? What intentions can they have? What plan can Theresa mean? Yes, it must be owned, Lothario is begirt with secret influences and combinations: I myself have found that they are active, that they take a certain charge of the proceedings, of the destiny, of several people, and contrive to guide them. The ulterior objects of these mysteries I know not; but their nearest purpose, that of snatching my Theresa from me, I perceive but too distinctly. On the one hand, this prospect of Lothario's happiness, which they exhibit to me, may be but a hollow show: on the other hand, I see my dear, my honoured bride inviting me to her affection. What shall I do? What shall I forbear?"

"A little patience!" said Natalia: "a little time for thought. In these singular perplexities I know but this, that what can never be recalled should not be done in haste. To a fable, to an artful plan, we have steadfastness and prudence to oppose: whether Jarno

has been speaking true or false must soon appear. If my brother has actually hopes of a union with Theresa, it were hard to cut him off for ever from that prospect at the moment when it seems so kindly inviting him. Let us wait at least till we discover whether he himself knows anything of it, whether he believes and hopes."

These prudent counsels were confirmed by a letter from Lothario. "I do not send Jarno," he wrote: "a line from my hand is more to thee than the minutest narrative in the mouth of a messenger. I am certain Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother; and I cannot renounce hope of being hers, till she, too, is persuaded, and can then decide between my friend and me, with calm consideration. Let him not leave thee, I entreat it! The happiness, the life, of a brother is at stake. I promise thee, this uncertainty shall not be long."

"You see how the matter stands," said she to Wilhelm, with a friendly air: "give me your word of honour that you will not leave the house!"

"I give it!" cried he, stretching out his hand: "I will not leave this house against your will. I thank Heaven, and my better Genius, that on this occasion I am led, and led by you."

Natalia wrote Theresa an account of everything, declaring that she would not let her friend away. She sent Lothario's letter also.

Theresa answered, "I wondered not a little that Lothario is himself convinced: to his sister he would not feign to this extent. I am vexed, greatly vexed. It is better that I say no more. But I will come to thee, so soon as I have got poor Lydia settled: they are treating her cruelly. I fear we are all betrayed, and shall be so betrayed that we shall never reach the truth. If my friend were of my opinion, he would give thee the slip after all, and throw himself into the

arms of his Theresa, whom none shall take away from him. But I, as I dread, shall lose him, and not regain Lothario. From the latter they are taking Lydia by showing him, afar off, the prospect of obtaining me. I will say no more: the entanglement will grow still deeper. Whether, in the meantime, these delightful positions in which we stand to each other may not be so pushed awry, so undermined and broken down, that, when the darkness passes off, the mischief can no longer admit of remedy, time will show. If my friend do not break away, in a few days I myself will come and seek him out beside thee, and hold him fast. Thou marvellest how this passion can have gained the mastery of thy Theresa. It is no passion, but conviction: it is a belief, that, since Lothario can never be mine, this new friend will make me happy. Tell him so, in the name of the little boy that sat with him underneath the oak, and thanked him for his sympathy. Tell it him in the name of Theresa, who met his offers with a hearty openness. My first dream of living with Lothario has wandered far away from my soul: the dream of living with my other friend is yet wholly present to me. Do they hold me so light as to think that it were easy to exchange the former with the latter?"

"I depend on you," said Natalia to Wilhelm, handing him the letter: "you will not leave me. Consider that the comfort of my life is in your hands. My being is so intimately bound and interwoven with my brother's, that he feels no sorrow which I do not feel, no joy which does not likewise gladden me. Nay, I may truly say, through him alone I have experienced that the heart can be affected and exalted; that in the world there may be joy, love, and an emotion which contents the soul beyond its utmost want."

She stopped: Wilhelm took her hand, and cried, "Oh, continue! This is the time for a true, mutual

disclosure of our thoughts: it never was more necessary for us to be well acquainted with each other."

"Yes, my friend!" said she, smiling, with her quiet, soft, indescribable dignity: "perhaps it is not out of season, if I tell you that the whole of what so many books, of what the world, holds up to us and names love, has always seemed to me a fable."

"You have never loved?" cried Wilhelm.

"Never or always!" said Natalia.

CHAPTER V.

DURING this conversation they kept walking up and down the garden; and Natalia gathered various flowers of singular forms, entirely unknown to Wilhelm, who began to ask their names, and occupy himself about them.

"You know not," said Natalia, "for whom I have been plucking these? I intend them for my uncle, whom we are to visit. The sun is shining even now so bright on the Hall of the Past, I must lead you in this moment; and I never go to it without a few of the flowers which my uncle liked particularly, in my hand. He was a peculiar man, susceptible of very strange impressions. For certain plants and animals, for certain neighbourhoods and persons, nay, for certain sorts of minerals, he had an especial love, which he was rarely able to explain. 'Had I not,' he would often say, 'from youth, withstood myself, and striven to form my judgment upon wide and general principles, I had been the narrowest and most intolerable person living. For nothing can be more intolerable than circumscribed peculiarity, in one from whom a pure and suitable activity might be required.' And yet he was obliged to confess that life and breath would, as it were, leave him, if he did not now and then indulge himself, not from time to time allow himself a brief and passionate enjoyment of what he could not always praise and justify. 'It is not my fault,' said he, 'if I have not brought my inclinations and my reason into perfect harmony.' On such occasions he would joke

with me, and say, 'Natalia may be looked upon as happy while she lives: her nature asks nothing which the world does not wish and use.'"

So speaking, they arrived again at the house. Natalia led him through a spacious passage to a door, before which lay two granite sphinxes. The door itself was in the Egyptian fashion, somewhat narrower above than below; and its brazen leaves prepared one for a serious or even a gloomy feeling. Wilhelm was, in consequence, agreeably surprised, when his expectation issued in a sentiment of pure, cheerful serenity, as he entered a hall where art and life took away all recollection of death and the grave. In the walls all around, a series of proportionable arches had been hollowed out, and large sarcophaguses stood in them: among the pillars in the intervals between them smaller openings might be seen, adorned with urns and similar vessels. The remaining spaces of the walls and vaulted roof were regularly divided: and between bright and variegated borders, within garlands and other ornaments, a multitude of cheerful and significant figures had been painted upon grounds of different sizes. The body of the edifice was covered with that fine, yellow marble, which passes into reddish: clear blue stripes of a chemical substance, happily imitating azure stone, while they satisfied the eye with contrast, gave unity and combination to the whole. All this pomp and decoration showed itself in the chastest architectural forms: and thus every one who entered felt as if exalted above himself; while the coöperating products of art, for the first time, taught him what man is and what he may become.

Opposite the door, on a stately sarcophagus, lay a marble figure of a noble-looking man, reclined upon a pillow. He held a roll before him, and seemed to look at it with still attention. It was placed so that

you could read with ease the words which stood there: *Think of living.*

Natalia took away a withered bunch of flowers, and laid the fresh one down before the figure of her uncle. For it was her uncle whom the marble represented. Wilhelm thought he recognised the features of the venerable gentleman whom he had seen when lying wounded in the green of the forest. "Here he and I passed many an hour," said Natalia, "while the hall was getting ready. In his latter years, he had gathered several skilful artists around him; and his chief delight was to invent or superintend the drawings and cartoons for these pictures."

Wilhelm could not satisfy himself with looking at the objects which surrounded him. "What a life," exclaimed he, "in this Hall of the Past! One might with equal justice name it Hall of the Present and the Future. Such all were, such all will be. There is nothing transitory but the individual who looks at and enjoys it. Here, this figure of the mother pressing her infant to her bosom will survive many generations of happy mothers. Centuries hence, perhaps some father will take pleasure in contemplating this bearded man, who has laid aside his seriousness, and is playing with his son. Thus shamefaced will the bride sit for ages, and, amid her silent wishes, need that she be comforted, that she be spoken to; thus impatient will the bridegroom listen on the threshold whether he may enter."

The figures Wilhelm was surveying with such rapture were of almost boundless number and variety. From the first jocund impulse of the child, merely to employ its every limb in sport, up to the peaceful, sequestered earnestness of the sage, you might, in fair and living order, see delineated how man possesses no capacity or tendency without employing and enjoying it. From the first soft, conscious feeling, when the

maiden lingers in pulling up her pitcher, and looks with satisfaction at her image in the clear fountain, to those high solemnities when kings and nations invoke the gods at the altar to witness their alliances, all was depicted, all was forcible and full of meaning.

It was a world, it was a heaven, that in this abode surrounded the spectator; and beside the thoughts which those polished forms suggested, beside the feelings they awoke, there still seemed something further to be present, something by which the whole man felt himself laid hold of. Wilhelm, too, observed this, though unable to account for it. "What is this," exclaimed he, "which independently of all signification, without any sympathy that human incidents and fortunes may inspire us with, acts on me so strongly and so gracefully? It speaks to me from the whole, it speaks from every part; though I have not fully understood the former, though I do not specially apply the latter to myself. What enchantment breathes from these surfaces, these lines, these heights and breadths, these masses and colours! What is it that makes these figures so delightful, even when slightly viewed, and merely in the light of decorations? Yes, I feel it: one might tarry here, might rest, might view the whole, and be happy; and yet feel and think something altogether different from aught that stood before his eyes."

And certainly, if we were able to describe how happily the whole was subdivided, how everything determined by its place, by combination or by contrast, by uniformity or by variety, appeared exactly as it should have done, producing an effect as perfect as distinct, we should transport the reader to a scene from which he would not be in haste to stir.

Four large marble candelabras rose in the corners of the hall: four smaller ones were in the midst of it, around a very beautifully worked sarcophagus, which,

judging from its size, might once have held a young person of middle stature.

Natalia paused beside this monument: she laid her hand upon it as she said, "My worthy uncle had a great attachment to this fine antique. 'It is not,' he would often say, 'the first blossoms alone that drop; such you can keep above, in these little spaces; but fruits also, which, hanging on their twigs, long give us the fairest hope, whilst a secret worm is preparing their too early ripeness and their quick decay.' I fear," continued she, "his words have been prophetic of that dear little girl, who seems withdrawing gradually from our cares, and bending to this peaceful dwelling."

As they were about to go, Natalia stopped, and said, "There is something still which merits your attention. Observe these half-round openings aloft on both sides. Here the choir can stand concealed while singing: these iron ornaments below the cornice serve for fastening on the tapestry, which, by order of my uncle, must be hung around at every burial. Music, particularly song, was a pleasure he could not live without; and it was one of his peculiarities, that he wished the singer not to be in view. 'In this respect,' he would say, 'they spoil us at the theatre: the music there is, as it were, subservient to the eye; it accompanies movements, not emotions. In oratorios and concerts, the form of the musician constantly disturbs us; true music is intended for the ear alone: a fine voice is the most universal thing that can be figured: and, while the narrow individual that uses it presents himself before the eye, he cannot fail to trouble the effect of that pure universality. The person whom I am to speak with, I must see; because it is a solitary man, whose form and character give worth or worthlessness to what he says: but, on the other hand, whoever sings to me must be invisible; his form must not confuse me, or corrupt my judgment. Here it is

but one human organ speaking to another: it is not spirit speaking to spirit, not a thousandfold world to the eye, not a heaven to the man.' On the same principles, in respect of instrumental music, he required that the orchestra should as much as possible be hid; because, by the mechanical exertions, by the mean and awkward gestures of the performers, our feelings are so much dispersed and perplexed. Accordingly, he always used to shut his eyes while hearing music; thereby to concentrate his whole being on the single pure enjoyment of the ear."

They were about to leave the hall, when they heard the children running hastily along the passage, and Felix crying, "No, I! No, I!"

Mignon rushed in at the open door: she was foremost, but out of breath, and could not speak a word. Felix, still at some distance, shouted out, "Mamma Theresa is come!" The children had run a race, as it seemed, to bring the news. Mignon was lying in Natalia's arms: her heart was beating vehemently.

"Naughty child," said Natalia, "art thou not forbidden to make violent exertions? See how thy heart is beating!"

"Let it break!" said Mignon with a deep sigh: "it has beat too long."

They had scarcely composed themselves from this surprise, this sort of consternation, when Theresa entered. She flew to Natalia, clasped her and Mignon in her arms. Then, turning round to Wilhelm, she looked at him with her clear eyes, and said "Well, my friend, how is it with you? You have not let them cheat you?" He made a step toward her: she sprang to him, and hung upon his neck. "O my Theresa!" cried he.

"My friend, my love, my husband! Yes, for ever thine!" cried she, amid the warmest kisses.

Felix pulled her by the gown, and cried, "Mamma

Theresa, I am here too!" Natalia stood, and looked before her: Mignon on a sudden clapped her left hand on her heart, and, stretching out the right arm violently, fell with a shriek at Natalia's feet, as dead.

The fright was great: no motion of the heart or pulse was to be traced. Wilhelm took her on his arm, and hastily carried her away: the body hung lax over his shoulders. The presence of the doctor was of small avail: he and the young surgeon, whom we know already, strove in vain. The dear little creature could not be recalled to life.

Natalia beckoned to Theresa: the latter took her friend by the hand, and led him from the room. He was dumb, not uttering a word: he durst not meet her eyes. He sat down with her upon the sofa, where he had first found Natalia. He thought with great rapidity along a series of fateful incidents, or, rather, he did not think, but let his soul be worked on by the thoughts which would not leave it. There are moments in life when past events, like winged shuttles, dart to and fro before us, and by their incessant movements weave a web which we ourselves, in a greater or less degree, have spun and put upon the loom. "My friend, my love!" said Theresa, breaking silence, as she took him by the hand, "let us stand together firmly in this hour, as we perhaps shall often have to do in similar hours. These are occurrences which it takes two united hearts to suffer. Think, my friend, feel, that thou art not alone: show that thou lovest thy Theresa by imparting thy sorrows to her!" She embraced him, and drew him softly to her bosom: he clasped her in his arms, and pressed her strongly toward him. "The poor child," cried he, "used in mournful moments to seek shelter and protection in my unstable bosom: let the stability of thine assist me in this heavy hour." They held each other fast; he felt her heart beat against his breast; but in his

spirit all was desolate and void: only the figures of Mignon and Natalia flitted like shadows across the waste of his imagination.

Natalia entered. "Give us thy blessing!" cried Theresa: "let us, in this melancholy moment, be united before thee!" Wilhelm had hid his face upon Theresa's neck: he was so far relieved that he could weep. He did not hear Natalia come; he did not see her; but, at the sound of her voice, his tears redoubled. "What God has joined I will not part," she answered, smiling, "but to unite you is not in my power; nor am I gratified to see that sorrow and sympathy seem altogether to have banished from your hearts the recollection of my brother." At these words, Wilhelm started from Theresa's arms. "Whither are you going?" cried the ladies. "Let me see the child," said he, "whom I have killed! Misfortune, when we look upon it with our eyes, is smaller than when our imagination sinks the evil down into the recesses of the soul. Let us view the departed angel! Her serene countenance will say to us that it is well with her." As his friends could not restrain the agitated youth, they followed him; but the worthy doctor with the surgeon met them, and prevented them from coming near the dead. "Keep away from this mournful object," said he, "and allow me, so far as I am able, to give some continuance to these remains. On this dear and singular being I will now display the beautiful art, not only of embalming bodies, but of retaining in them a look of life. As I foresaw her death, the preparations are already made: with these helps I shall undoubtedly succeed. Give me but a few days, and ask not to see the child again till I have brought her to the Hall of the Past."

The young surgeon had in his hands that well-known case of instruments. "From whom can he have got it?" Wilhelm asked the doctor. "I know it

very well," replied Natalia: "he has it from his father, who dressed your wounds when we found you in the forest."

"Then, I have not been mistaken! I recognised the band at once!" cried Wilhelm. "Oh, get it for me! It was this that first gave me any hint of my unknown benefactress. What weal and woe will such a thing survive! Beside how many sorrows has this band already been, and its threads still hold together! How many men's last moments has it witnessed, and its colours are not yet faded! It was near me in one of the fairest hours of my existence, when I lay wounded on the ground, and your helpful form appeared before me, and the child whom we are now lamenting sat with its bloody hair, busied with the tenderest care to save my life!"

It was not long that our friends could converse about this sad occurrence, that Theresa could inquire about the child, and the probable cause of its unexpected death; for strangers were announced, who, on making their appearance, proved to be well-known strangers. Lothario, Jarno, and the abbé entered. Natalia met her brother: among the rest there was a momentary silence. Theresa, smiling on Lothario, said, "You scarcely expected to find me here; of course, it would not have been advisable that we should visit one another at the present time: however after such an absence, take my cordial welcome."

Lothario took her hand, and answered, "If we are to suffer and renounce, it may as well take place in the presence of the object whom we love and wish for. I desire no influence on your determination: my confidence in your heart, in your understanding, and clear sense, is still so great, that I willingly commit to your disposal my fate and that of my friend."

The conversation turned immediately to general, nay, we may say, to trivial topics. The company soon

separated into single pairs, for walking. Natalia was with her brother, Theresa with the abbé: our friend was left with Jarno in the castle.

The appearance of the guests at the moment when a heavy sorrow was oppressing Wilhelm had, instead of dissipating his attention, irritated him, and made him worse: he was fretful and suspicious, and unable or uncareful to conceal it, when Jarno questioned him about his sulky silence. "What is the use of saying more?" cried Wilhelm. "Lothario with his helpers is come; and it were strange if those mysterious watchmen of the tower, who are constantly so busy, did not now exert their influence on us, to effect I know not what strange purpose. So far as I have known these saintly gentlemen, it seems to be in every case their laudable endeavour to separate the united and to unite the separated. What sort of web their weaving will produce may probably to unholy eyes be for ever a riddle."

"You are cross and bitter," said the other: "that is as it should be. Would you get into a proper passion, it were still better."

"That, too, might come about," said Wilhelm: "I fear much some of you are in the mind to load my patience, natural and acquired, beyond what it will bear."

"In the meantime," said the other, "till we see what *is* to be the issue of the matter, I could like to tell you somewhat of the tower which you appear to view with such mistrust."

"It stands with you," said Wilhelm, "whether you will risk your eloquence on an attention so distracted. My mind is so engaged at present, that I know not whether I can take a proper interest in these very dignified adventures."

"Your pleasing humour shall not hinder me," said Jarno, "from explaining this affair to you. You

reckon me a clever fellow; I want to make you reckon me an honest one: and, what is more, on this occasion I am bidden speak." "I could wish," said Wilhelm, "that you did it of yourself, and with an honest purpose to inform me; but, as I cannot hear without suspicion, wherefore should I hear at all?" "If I have nothing better to do," said Jarno, "than tell you stories, you, too, have time to listen to me; and to this you may perhaps feel more inclined, when I assure you that all you saw in the tower was but the relics of a youthful undertaking, in regard to which the greater part of the initiated were once in deep earnest, though all of them now view it with a smile."

"So, with these pompous signs and words you do but mock?" cried Wilhelm. "With a solemn air, you lead us to a place inspiring reverence by its aspect; you make the strangest visions pass before us; you give us rolls full of glorious mystic apothegms, of which, in truth, we understand but little; you disclose to us, that hitherto we have been pupils; you solemnly pronounce us free; and we are just as wise as we were." "Have you not the parchment by you?" said the other. "It contains a deal of sense: those general apothegms were not picked up at random, though they seem obscure and empty to a man without experiences to recollect while reading them. But give me the Indenture, as we call it, if it is at hand." "Quite at hand," cried Wilhelm: "such an amulet well merits being worn upon one's breast." "Well," said Jarno, smiling, "who knows whether the contents of it may not one day find place in your head and heart?"

He opened the roll, and glanced over the first half of it. "This," said he, "regards the cultivation of our gifts for art and science, of which let others speak: the second treats of life; here I am more at home."

He then began to read passages, speaking between

whiles, and connecting them with his remarks and narrative. "The taste of youth for secrecy, for ceremonies, for imposing words, is extraordinary, and frequently bespeaks a certain depth of character. In those years we wish to feel our whole nature seized and moved, even though it be but vaguely and darkly. The youth who happens to have lofty aspirations and forecastings thinks that secrets yield him much, that he must depend much on secrets, and effect much by means of them. It was with such views that the abbé favoured a certain society of young men, partly according to his principle of aiding every tendency of nature, partly out of habit and inclination; for in former times he had himself been joined to an association which appears to have accomplished many things in secret. For this business I was least of all adapted. I was older than the rest; from youth I had thought clearly; I wished in all things nothing more than clearness; I felt no interest in men but to know them as they were. With the same taste, I gradually infected all the best of our associates, and this circumstance had almost given a false direction to our plan of culture. For we now began to look at nothing but the errors and the narrowness of others, and to think ourselves a set of highly gifted personages. Here the abbé came to our assistance: he taught us that we never should inspect the conduct of men, unless we at the same time took an interest in improving it; and that through action only could we ever be in a condition to inspect and watch ourselves. He advised us, however, to retain the primary forms of the society: hence there was still a sort of law in our proceedings; the first mystic impressions might be traced in the constitution of the whole. At length, as by a practical similitude, it took the form of a corporate trade, whose business was the arts. Hence came the names of apprentices, assistants, and masters. We wished to

see with our own eyes, and to form for ourselves, a special record of our own experience in the world. Hence those numerous confessions which in part we ourselves wrote, in part made others write, and out of which the several *Apprenticeships* were afterward compiled. The formation of his character is not the chief concern with every man. Many merely wish to find a sort of recipe for comfort, directions for acquiring riches, or whatever good they aim at. All such, when they would not be instructed in their proper duties, we were wont to mystify, to treat with jugglerries, and every sort of hocus-pocus, and at length to shove aside. We advanced none to the rank of masters, but such as clearly felt and recognised the purpose they were born for, and had got enough of practice to proceed along their way with a certain cheerfulness and ease."

"In my case, then," cried Wilhelm, "your ceremony has been very premature; for, since the day when you pronounced me free, what I can, will, or shall do has been more unknown to me than ever." "We are not to blame for this perplexity: perhaps good fortune will deliver us. In the meantime, listen: 'He in whom there is much to be developed will be later in acquiring true perceptions of himself and of the world. There are few who at once have Thought and the capacity of Action. Thought expands, but lames: Action animates, but narrows.'"

"I beg of you," cried Wilhelm, "not to read me any more of that surprising stuff. These phrases have sufficiently confused me before." "I will stick by my story, then," said Jarno, half rolling up the parchment, into which, however, he kept casting frequent glances. "I myself have been of less service to the cause of our society, and of my fellow men, than any other member. I am but a bad schoolmaster: I cannot bear to look on people making awkward trials;

when I see a person wander from his path, I feel constrained to call to him, although it were a night-walker going straight to break his neck. On this point I had a continual struggle with the abbé, who maintains that error can never be cured, except by erring. About you, too, we often argued. He had taken an especial liking to you, and it is saying something to have caught so much of his attention. For me, you must admit, that every time we met I told you just the naked truth." "Certainly, you spared me very little," said the other; "and I think you still continue faithful to your principles." "What is the use of sparing," answered Jarno, "when a young man of many good endowments is taking a quite false direction?" "Pardon me," said Wilhelm: "you have rigorously enough denied me any talent for the stage; I confess to you, that though I have entirely renounced the art, I cannot think myself entirely incapable." "And with me," said Jarno, "it is well enough decided, that a person who can only play himself is no player. Whoever cannot change himself, in temper and in form, into many forms, does not deserve the name. Thus, you, for example, acted Hamlet, and some other characters, extremely well; because, in these, your form, your disposition, and the temper of the moment, suited. For an amateur theatre, for any one who saw no other way before him, this would, perhaps, have answered well enough. But," continued Jarno, looking on the roll, "'we should guard against a talent which we cannot hope to practise in perfection. Improve it as we may, we shall always, in the end, when the merit of the master has become apparent to us, painfully lament the loss of time and strength devoted to such botching.'"

"Do not read!" cried Wilhelm: "I entreat you earnestly, speak on, tell, inform me! So, the abbé aided me in Hamlet: he provided me a Ghost?"

"Yes; for he asserted that it was the only way of curing you, if you were curable." "And on this account he left the veil, and bade me flee?" "Yes: he hoped that, having fairly acted Hamlet, your desire of acting would be satiated. He maintained that you would never go upon the stage again: I believed the contrary, and I was right. We argued on the subject that very evening, when the play was over." "You saw me act, then?" "I did indeed." "And who was it that played the Ghost?" "That I cannot tell you: either the abbé or his twin-brother; but I think the latter, for he is a little taller." "You, then, have secrets from each other?" "Friends may and must *have* secrets from, but they *are* not secrets to, each other."

"The very thought of that perplexity perplexes me. Let me understand the man to whom I owe so many thanks as well as such reproaches."

"What gives him such a value in our estimation," answered Jarno, "what, in some degree, secures him the dominion over all of us, is the free, sharp eye that nature has bestowed on him, for all the powers which dwell in man, and are susceptible of cultivation, each according to its kind. Most men, even the most accomplished, are but limited: each prizes certain properties in others and himself; these alone he favours, these alone will he have cultivated. Directly the reverse is the procedure of our abbé: for every gift he has a feeling; every gift he delights to recognise and forward. But I must look into my roll again! 'It is all men that make up mankind, all powers taken together that make up the world. These are frequently at variance; and, as they endeavour to destroy each other, Nature holds them together, and again produces them. From the first animal tendency to handicraft attempts, up to the highest practising of intellectual art; from the inarticulate crowings of the happy infant,

up to the polished utterance of the orator and singer; from the first bickerings of boys, up to the vast equipments by which countries are conquered and retained; from the slightest kindliness, and the most transitory love, up to the fiercest passion, and the most earnest covenant; from the merest perception of sensible presence, up to the faintest presentiments and hopes of the remotest spiritual future, — all this, and much more also, lies in man, and must be cultivated, yet not in one, but in many. Every gift is valuable, and ought to be unfolded. When one encourages the beautiful alone, and another encourages the useful alone, it takes them both to form a man. The useful encourages itself; for the multitude produce it, and no one can dispense with it: the beautiful must be encouraged; for few can set it forth, and many need it.'"

"Hold! Hold!" cried Wilhelm: "I have read it all." "Yet a line or two!" said Jarno. "Here is our worthy abbé to a hair's-breadth: 'One power rules another, none can cultivate another: in each endowment, and not elsewhere, lies the force which must complete it; this many people do not understand, who yet attempt to teach and influence.'" "Nor do I understand it," answered Wilhelm. "You will often hear the abbé preach on this text; and, therefore, 'Let us merely keep a clear and steady eye on what is in ourselves, on what endowments of our own we mean to cultivate: let us be just to others, for we ourselves are only to be valued in so far as we can value.'" "For Heaven's sake, no more of these wise saws! I feel them to be but a sorry balsam for a wounded heart. Tell me, rather, with your cruel settledness, what you expect of me, how, and in what manner, you intend to sacrifice me." "For every such suspicion, I assure you, you will afterward beg our pardon. It is your affair to try and choose: it is ours to aid you. A man is never happy till his vague striving has itself

marked out its proper limitation. It is not to me that you must look, but to the abbé: it is not of yourself that you must think, but of what surrounds you. Thus, for instance, learn to understand Lothario's superiority; how his quick and comprehensive vision is inseparably united with activity; how he constantly advances; how he expands his influence, and carries every one along with him. Wherever he may be, he bears a world about with him: his presence animates and kindles. Observe our good physician, on the other hand. His nature seems to be directly the reverse. If the former only works upon the general whole, and at a distance, the latter turns his piercing eye upon the things that are beside him: he rather furnishes the means for being active, than himself displays or stimulates activity. His conduct is exactly like the conduct of a good domestic manager: he is busied silently, while he provides for each in his peculiar sphere; his knowledge is a constant gathering and expanding, a taking in and giving out on a small scale. Perhaps Lothario in a single day might overturn what the other had for years been employed in building up; but perhaps Lothario also might impart to others, in a moment, strength sufficient to restore a hundred-fold what he had overturned." "It is but a sad employment," answered Wilhelm, "to contemplate the sublime advantages of others, at a moment when we are at variance with ourselves. Such contemplations suit the man at ease, not him whom passion and uncertainty are agitating." "Peacefully and reasonably to contemplate is at no time hurtful," answered Jarno: "and, while we use ourselves to think of the advantages of others, our own mind comes insensibly to imitate them; and every false activity, to which our fancy was alluring us, is then willingly abandoned. Free your mind, if you can, from all suspicion and anxiety. Here comes the abbé: be

courteous toward him, till you have learned still further what you owe him. The rogue! There he goes between Natalia and Theresa: I could bet he is contriving something. As in general he rather likes to act the part of Destiny; so he does not fail to show a taste for making matches when he finds an opportunity."

Wilhelm, whose angry and fretful humour all the placid, prudent words of Jarno had not bettered, thought his friend exceedingly indelicate for mentioning marriage at a moment like the present: he answered, with a smile indeed, but a rather bitter one, "I thought the taste for making matches had been left to those that had a taste for one another."

CHAPTER VI.

THE company had met again: the conversation of our friends was necessarily interrupted. Erelong a courier was announced, as wishing to deliver with his own hand a letter to Lothario. The man was introduced: he had a vigorous, sufficient look; his livery was rich and handsome. Wilhelm thought he knew him, nor was he mistaken; for it was the man whom he had sent to seek Philina and the fancied Mariana, and who never came back. Our friend was about to address him, when Lothario, who had read the letter, asked the courier with a serious, almost angry, tone, "What is your master's name?"

"Of all questions," said the other, with a prudent air, "this is the one which I am least prepared to answer. I hope the letter will communicate the necessary information: verbally I have been charged with nothing."

"Be it as it will," replied Lothario with a smile: "since your master puts such trust in me as to indite a letter so exceedingly facetious, he shall be welcome to us." "He will not keep you long waiting for him," said the courier, with a bow, and withdrew.

"Do but hear the distracted, stupid message," said Lothario. "'As of all guests, Good Humour is believed to be the most agreeable wherever he appears, and as I always keep that gentleman beside me by way of travelling companion, I feel persuaded that the visit I intend to pay your noble lordship will not be taken ill: on the

contrary, I hope the whole of your illustrious family will witness my arrival with complete satisfaction, and in due time also my departure; being always, *et cætera*, Count of Snailfoot.'"

"'Tis a new family," said the abbé.

"A vicariat count, perhaps," said Jarno.

"The secret is easy to unriddle," said Natalia: "I wager it is none but brother Friedrich, who has threatened us with a visit ever since my uncle's death."

"Right, fair and skilful sister!" cried a voice from the nearest thicket; and immediately a pleasant, cheerful youth stepped forward. Wilhelm could scarcely restrain a cry of wonder. "What!" exclaimed he: "does our fair-haired knave, too, meet me here?" Friedrich looked attentively, and, recognising Wilhelm, cried, "In truth, it would not have astonished me so much to have beheld the famous pyramids, which still stand fast in Egypt, or the grave of King Mausolus, which, as I am told, does not exist, here placed before me in my uncle's garden, as to find you in it, my old friend, and frequent benefactor. Accept my best and heartiest service!"

After he had kissed and complimented the whole circle, he again sprang toward Wilhelm, crying, "Use him well, this hero, this leader of armies, and dramatical philosopher! When we became acquainted first, I dressed his hair indifferently, I may say execrably; yet he afterward saved me from a pretty load of blows. He is magnanimous as Scipio, munificent as Alexander: at times he is in love, yet he never hates his rivals. Far from heaping coals of fire on the heads of his enemies, — a piece of service, I am told, which we can do for any one, — he rather, when his friends have carried off his love, despatches good and trusty servants after them, that they may not strike their feet against a stone."

In the same style he ran along with a volubility

which baffled all attempts to restrain it; and, as no one could reply to him in that vein, he had the conversation mostly to himself. "Do not wonder," cried he, "that I am so profoundly versed in sacred and profane writers: you shall hear by and by how I attained my learning." They wished to know how matters stood with him, — where he had been; but crowds of proverbs and old stories choked his explanation.

Natalia whispered to Theresa, "His gaiety afflicts me: I am sure at heart he is not merry."

As, except a few jokes which Jarno answered, Friedrich's merriment was met by no response from those about him, he was obliged at last to say, "Well, there is nothing left for me, but, among so many grave faces, to be grave myself. And as, in such a solemn scene, the burden of my sins falls heavy on my soul, I must honestly resolve upon a general confession; for which, however, you, my worthy gentlemen and ladies, shall not be a jot the wiser. This honourable friend already knows a little of my walk and conversation; he alone shall know the rest; and this the rather, as he alone has any cause to ask about it. Are not you," continued he to Wilhelm, "curious about the how and where, the when and wherefore? And how it stands with the conjugation of the Greek verb φιλέω, φιλῶ, and the derivatives of that very amiable part of speech?"

He then took Wilhelm by the arm, and led him off, pressing him and skipping around him with the liveliest air of kindness.

Scarcely had they entered Wilhelm's room, when Friedrich noticed, in the window, a powder-knife, with the inscription, "Think of me." "You keep your valuables well laid up!" said he. "This is the powder-knife Philina gave you, when I pulled your locks for you. I hope, in looking at it, you have diligently thought of that fair damsel; I assure you, she has not forgotten you: if I had not long ago obliterated every

trace of jealousy from my heart, I could not look on you without envy."

"Talk no more of that creature," answered Wilhelm. "I confess it was a while before I could get rid of the impression which her looks and manner made on me, but that was all."

"Fie, fie!" cried Friedrich. "Would any one deny his deary? You loved her as completely as a man could wish. No day passed without your giving her some present; and, when a German gives, you may be sure he loves. No alternative remained for me but whisking her away from you, and in this the little red officer at last succeeded."

"What! you were the officer whom we discovered with her, whom she travelled off with?"

"Yes," said Friedrich, "whom you took for Mariana. We had sport enough at the mistake."

"What cruelty," cried Wilhelm, "to leave me in such suspense!"

"And, besides, to take the courier, whom you sent to catch us, into pay!" said Friedrich. "He is a very active fellow: we have kept him by us ever since. And the girl herself I love as desperately as ever. She has managed me in some peculiar style: I am almost in a mythologic case; every day I tremble at the thought of being metamorphosed."

"But tell me, pray," said Wilhelm, "where have you acquired this stock of erudition? It surprises me to hear the strange way you have assumed of speaking always with a reference to ancient histories and fables."

"It was by a pleasant plan," said Friedrich, "that I got my learning. Philina lives with me at present: we have got a lease of an old, knightly castle from the farmer in whose ground it is; and there we live, with the hobgoblins of the place, as merrily as possible. In one of the rooms we found a small, but choice, library, consisting of a Bible in folio, 'Gottfried's Chronicle,'

two volumes of the 'Theatrum Europæum,' an 'Acerra Philologica,' 'Gryphius's Writings,' and some other less important works. As we now and then, when tired of romping, felt the time hang heavy on our hands, we proposed to read some books; and, before we were aware, the time hung heavier than ever. At last Philina hit upon the royal plan of laying all the tomes, opened at once, upon a large table. We sat down opposite to one another: we read to one another, — always in detached passages, first from this book, then from that. We had a jolly time of it. We felt now as if we were in good society, where it is reckoned unbecoming to dwell on any subject, or search it to the bottom: we thought ourselves in witty, gay society, where none will let his neighbour speak. We regularly treat ourselves with this diversion every day, and the erudition we obtain from it is quite surprising. Already there is nothing new for us under the sun: on everything we see or hear, our learning offers us a hint. This method of instruction we diversify in many ways. Frequently we read by an old, spoiled sand-glass, which runs in a minute or two. The moment it is down, the silent party turns it round like lightning, and commences reading from his book; and no sooner is it down again, than the other cuts him short, and starts the former topic. Thus we study in a truly academic manner, with this difference, that our hours are shorter, and our studies extremely varied."

"This rioting is quite conceivable," said Wilhelm, "when a pair like you two are together; but how a pair so full of frolic stay together does not seem so easily conceivable."

"It is our good fortune," answered Friedrich, "and our bad. Philina dare not let herself be seen, — she cannot bear to see herself: she is with child. Nothing ever was so ludicrous and shapeless in the world. A little while before I came away, she chanced to cast an

eye upon the looking-glass in passing. 'Faugh!' cried she, and turned away her face: 'the living picture of the Frau Melina! Shocking figure! One looks entirely deplorable!'"

"I confess," said Wilhelm, with a smile, "it must be rather farcical to see a father and a mother, such as you and she, together."

"'Tis a foolish business," answered Friedrich, "that I must at last be raised to the paternal dignity. But she asserts, and the time agrees. At first that cursed visit which she paid you after 'Hamlet' gave me qualms."

"What visit?"

"I suppose you have not quite slept off the memory of it yet? The pretty, flesh-and-blood spirit of that night, if you do not know it, was Philina. The story was, in truth, a hard dower for me; but, if we cannot be content with such things, we should not be in love. Fatherhood, at any rate, depends entirely upon conviction: I am convinced, and so I am a father. There, you see, I can employ my logic in the proper season too. And, if the brat do not laugh itself to death so soon as it is born, it may prove, if not a useful, at least a pleasant, citizen of this world."

Whilst our friends were talking thus of mirthful subjects, the rest of the party had begun a serious conversation. Scarcely were Friedrich and Wilhelm gone, when the abbé led his friends, as if by chance, into a garden-house, and, having got them seated, thus addressed them:

"We have in general terms asserted that Fräulein Theresa was not the daughter of her reputed mother: it is fit that we should now explain ourselves on this matter, in detail. I shall relate the story to you, which I undertake to prove and to elucidate in every point.

"Frau von —— spent the first years of her wed-

lock in the utmost concord with her husband; but they had this misfortune, that the children she brought him came into the world dead: and, on occasion of the third, the mother was declared by the physicians to be on the verge of death, and to be sure of death if she should ever have another. The parties were obliged to take their resolution: they would not break the marriage; it was too suitable to both, in a civil point of view. Frau von —— sought in the culture of her mind, in a certain habit of display, in the joys of vanity, a compensation for the happiness of motherhood, which was refused her. She cheerfully indulged her husband, when she noticed in him an attachment to a young lady, who had sole charge of their household, a person of beautiful exterior, and very solid character. Frau von —— herself, erelong, assisted in procuring an arrangement, by which the lady yielded to the wishes of Theresa's father; continuing to discharge her household duties, and testifying to the mistress of the family, if possible, a more submissive zeal to serve her than before.

"After awhile she declared herself with child; and both the father and his wife, on this occasion, though from very different causes, fell upon the same idea. Herr von —— wished to have the offspring of his mistress educated in the house as his lawful child; and Frau von ——, angry that the indiscretion of her doctor had allowed some whisper of her condition to go abroad, proposed by a supposititious child to counteract this, and likewise to retain, by such compliance, the superiority in her household, which otherwise she was like to lose. However, she was more backward than her husband: she observed his purpose, and contrived, without any formal question, to facilitate his explanation. She made her own terms, obtaining almost everything that she required; and hence the will in which so little care was taken of the child.

The old doctor was dead: they applied to a young, active, and discreet successor; he was well rewarded; he looked forward to the credit of exposing and remedying the unskilfulness and premature decision of his deceased colleague. The true mother not unwillingly consented; they managed the deception very well; Theresa came into the world, and was surrendered to a stepmother, while her mother fell a victim to the plot; having died by venturing out too early, and left the father inconsolable.

"Frau von —— had thus attained her object; in the eyes of the world she had a lovely child, which she paraded with excessive vanity: and she had also been delivered from a rival whose fortune she envied, and whose influence, at least in prospect, she beheld with apprehension. The infant she loaded with her tenderness: and by affecting, in trustful hours, a lively feeling for her husband's loss, she gained a mastery of his heart; so that in a manner he surrendered all to her, laid his own happiness and that of his child in her hands: nor was it till a short while prior to his death, and, in some degree, by the exertions of his grown-up daughter, that he again assumed the rule in his own house. This, fair Theresa, was in all probability the secret which your father, in his last sickness, so struggled to communicate: this is what I wished to lay circumstantially before you, at a moment when our young friend, who by a strange concurrence has become your bridegroom, happens to be absent. Here are the papers which will prove in the most rigorous manner everything that I have stated. You will also see from them how long I have been following the trace of this discovery; though, till now, I could never attain certainty respecting it. I did not risk imparting to my friend the possibility of such a happiness: it would have wounded him too deeply had this hope a second time deceived him. You will understand poor Lydia's

suspicions: I readily confess, I nowise favoured our friend's attachment to her, when I began again to look forward to his union with Theresa."

To this recital no one replied. The ladies, some days afterward, returned the papers, not making any further mention of them.

There were other matters in abundance to engage the party when they were together; and the scenery around was so delightful, that our friends, singly or in company, on horseback, in carriages, or on foot, delighted to explore it. On one of these excursions, Jarno took an opportunity of opening the affair to Wilhelm: he delivered him the papers; not, however, seeming to require from him any resolution in regard to them.

"In this most singular position in which I am," said our friend, "I need only repeat to you what I said at first, in presence of Natalia, and with the clear intention to fulfil it. Lothario and his friends may require of me every sort of self-denial; I here abandon in their favour all pretension to Theresa: do you procure me in return a formal discharge. There requires no great reflection to decide. For some days I have noticed that Theresa has to make an effort in retaining any show of the vivacity with which she welcomed me at first. Her affection is gone from me; or, rather, I have never had it."

"Such affairs are more conveniently explained," said Jarno, "by a gradual process, in silence and expectation, than by many words, which always cause a sort of fermentation and embarrassment."

"I rather think," said Wilhelm, "that precisely this affair admits of the most clear and calm decision on the spot. I have often been reproached with hesitation and uncertainty: why will you now, when I do not hesitate, commit against myself the fault you have often blamed in me? Do people take such trouble

with our training only to let us feel that they themselves will not be trained? Yes: grant me soon the cheerful thought that I am out of a mistaken project, into which I entered with the purest feelings in the world."

Notwithstanding this request, some days elapsed without his hearing any more of the affair, or observing any further alteration in his friends. The conversation, on the contrary, was general, and of indifferent matters.

CHAPTER VII.

JARNO and Wilhelm were sitting one day by Natalia. "You are thoughtful, Jarno," said the lady: "I have seen it in your looks for some time."

"I am so," answered Jarno: "a weighty business is before me, which we have for years been meditating, and must now begin to execute. You already know the outline of it: I may speak of it before our friend; for it will depend on himself whether he, too, shall not share in it. You are going to get rid of me before long: I mean to take a voyage to America."

"To America?" said Wilhelm, smiling: "such an adventure I did not anticipate from you, still less that you would have selected me for a companion."

"When you rightly understand our plan," said Jarno, "you will give it a more honourable name, and, perhaps, yourself be tempted to embark in it. Listen to me. It requires but a slight acquaintance with the business of the world to see that mighty changes are at hand, that property is almost nowhere quite secure."

"Of the business of the world I have no clear notion," interrupted Wilhelm; "and it is but of late that I ever thought about my property. Perhaps I had done well to drive it out of my head still longer: the care of securing it appears to give us hypochondria."

"Hear me out," said Jarno. "Care beseems ripe age, that youth may live, for a time, free from care; in the conduct of poor mortals, equilibrium cannot be restored except by contraries. As matters go, it is anything but prudent to have property in only one place,

to commit your money to a single spot; and yet it is difficult to guide it well in many. We have, therefore, thought of something else. From our old tower there is a society to issue, which must spread itself through every quarter of the world, and to which members from every quarter of the world shall be admissible. We shall ensure a competent subsistence to each other, in the single case of a revolution happening, which might drive any part of us entirely from their possessions. I am now proceeding to America to profit by the good connections which our friend established while he stayed there. The abbé means to go to Russia: if you like to join us, you shall have the choice of continuing in Germany to help Lothario, or of accompanying me. I conjecture you will choose the latter: to take a distant journey is extremely serviceable to a young man."

Wilhelm thought a moment, and replied, "The offer well deserves consideration; for erelong the word with me must be, The farther off, the better. You will let me know your plan, I hope, more perfectly. It is, perhaps, my ignorance of life that makes me think so; but such a combination seems to me to be attended with insuperable difficulties."

"The most of which, till now, have been avoided," answered Jarno, "by the circumstance that we have been but few in number, honourable, discreet, determined people, animated by a certain general feeling, out of which alone the feeling proper for societies can spring." "And if you speak me fair," said Friedrich, who hitherto had only listened, "I, too, will go along with you."

Jarno shook his head.

"Well, what objections can you make?" cried Friedrich. "In a new colony, young colonists will be required; these I bring with me: merry colonists will also be required; of these I make you certain. Be-

sides, I recollect a certain damsel, who is out of place on this side of the water, — the fair, soft-hearted Lydia. What is the poor thing to do with her sorrow and mourning, unless she get an opportunity to throw it to the bottom of the sea, unless some brave fellow take her by the hand? You, my benefactor," said he, turning toward Wilhelm, "you have a taste for comforting forsaken persons: what withholds you now? Each of us might take his girl under his arm, and trudge with Jarno."

This proposal struck Wilhelm offensively. He answered with affected calmness, "I know not whether she is unengaged; and, as in general I seem to be unfortunate in courtship, I shall hardly think of making the attempt."

"Brother Friedrich," said Natalia, "though thy own conduct is so full of levity, it does not follow that such sentiments will answer others. Our friend deserves a heart that shall belong to him alone, that shall not, at his side, be moved by recollections of some previous attachment. It was only with a character as pure and reasonable as Theresa's that such a venture could be risked."

"Risk!" cried Friedrich: "in love it is all risk. In the grove or at the altar, with a clasp of the arms or a golden ring, by the chirping of the cricket or the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, it is all but a risk: chance does it all."

"I have often noticed," said Natalia, "that our principles are just a supplement to our peculiar manner of existence. We delight to clothe our errors in the garb of universal laws, to attribute them to irresistibly appointed causes. Do but think by what a path thy dear will lead thee, now that she has drawn thee toward her, and holds thee fast there."

"She herself is on a very pretty path," said Friedrich, — "on the path to saintship. A by-path, it is

true, and somewhat roundabout, but the pleasanter and surer for that. Maria of Magdala travelled it, and who can say how many more? But, on the whole, sister, when the point in hand is love, thou shouldst not mingle in it. In my opinion, thou wilt never marry, till a bride is lacking somewhere: in that case, thou wilt give thyself, with thy habitual charity, to be the supplement of some peculiar manner of existence, not otherwise. So let us strike a bargain with this soul-broker, and agree about our travelling-company."

"You come too late with your proposals," answered Jarno: "Lydia is disposed of."

"And how?" cried Friedrich.

"I myself have offered her my hand," said Jarno.

"Old gentleman," said Friedrich, "you have done a feat to which, if we regard it as a substantive, various adjectives might be appended; various predicates, if we regard it as a subject."

"I must honestly confess," replied Natalia, "it appears a dangerous experiment to make a helpmate of a woman, at the very moment when her love for another man is like to drive her to despair."

"I have ventured," answered Jarno: "under a certain stipulation she is to be mine. And, believe me, there is nothing in the world more precious than a heart susceptible of love and passion. Whether it has loved, whether it still loves, are points which I regard not. The love of which another is the object charms me almost more than that which is directed to myself. I see the strength, the force, of a tender soul; and my self-love does not trouble the delightful vision."

"Have you, then, talked with Lydia of late?" inquired Natalia.

Jarno smiled and nodded: Natalia shook her head, and said as she rose, "I really know not what to make of you; but me you shall not mystify, I promise you."

She was about retiring, when the abbé entered with

a letter in his hand. "Stay, if you please," said he to her: "I have a proposal here, respecting which your counsel will be welcome. The marchese, your late uncle's friend, whom for some time we have been expecting, will be here in a day or two. He writes to me, that German is not so familiar to him as he had supposed; that he needs a person who possesses this and other languages, to travel with him; that, as he wishes to connect himself with scientific rather than political society, he cannot do without some such interpreter. I can think of no one better suited for the post than our young friend here. He knows the language, is acquainted with many things beside; and, for himself, it cannot but be advantageous to travel over Germany in such society and such circumstances. Till we have seen our native country, we have no scale to judge of other countries by. What say you, my friend? What say you, Natalia?"

Nobody objected to the scheme: Jarno seemed to think his transatlantic project would not be a hindrance, as he did not mean to sail directly. Natalia did not speak, and Friedrich uttered various saws about the uses of travel.

This new project so provoked our friend, that he could hardly conceal his irritation. He saw in this proposal a concerted plan for getting rid of him as soon as possible; and, what was worse, they went so openly to work, and seemed so utterly regardless of his feelings. The suspicions Lydia had excited in him, all that he himself had witnessed, rose again upon his mind: the simple manner in which everything had been explained by Jarno now appeared to him another piece of artifice.

He constrained himself, and answered, "At all events, the offer will require mature deliberation."

"A quick decision may, perhaps, be necessary," said the abbé.

"For that I am not prepared," answered Wilhelm. "We can wait till the marchese comes, and then observe if we agree together. One condition must, however, be conceded first of all, — that I take Felix with me."

"This is a condition," said the abbé, "which will scarcely be conceded."

"And I do not see," cried Wilhelm, "why I should let any man prescribe conditions to me, or why, if I choose to view my native country, I must go in company with an Italian."

"Because a young man," said the abbé, with a certain imposing earnestness, "is always called upon to form connections."

Wilhelm, feeling that he could not long retain his self-command, as it was Natalia's presence only which, in some degree, assuaged his indignation, hastily made answer, "Give me a little while to think. I imagine it will not be very hard to settle whether I am called upon to form additional connections; or ordered irresistibly, by heart and head, to free myself from such a multiplicity of bonds, which seem to threaten me with a perpetual, miserable thraldom."

Thus he spoke, with a deeply agitated mind. A glance at Natalia somewhat calmed him: her form and dignity, in this impassioned moment, stamped themselves more deeply on his mind than ever.

"Yes," said he, so soon as he was by himself, "confess it, thou lovest her: thou once more feelest what it means to love with thy whole soul. Thus did I love Mariana, and deceive myself so dreadfully; I loved Philina, and could not help despising her; Aurelia I respected, and could not love; Theresa I reverenced, and paternal tenderness assumed the form of an affection for her. And now, when all the feelings that can make a mortal happy meet within my heart, now am I compelled to flee! Ah! why should these feelings and

convictions be combined with an insuperable longing? Why, without the hope of its fulfilment, should they utterly subvert all other happiness? Shall the sun and the world, society or any other gift of fortune, ever henceforth yield me pleasure? Wilt thou not for ever say, Natalia is not here? And yet, alas! Natalia will be always present to thee! If thou closest thy eyes, she will appear to thee: if thou openest them, her form will flit before all outward things, like the image which a dazzling object leaves behind it in the eye. Did not the swiftly passing figure of the Amazon dwell continually in thy imagination? And yet thou hadst but seen her, thou didst not know her. Now when thou knowest her, when thou hast been so long beside her, when she has shown such care about thee, — now are her qualities impressed as deeply upon thy soul as her form was then upon thy fancy. It is painful to be always seeking, but far more painful to have found, and to be forced to leave. What now shall I ask for further in the world? What now shall I look for further? Is there a country, a city, that contains a treasure such as this? And I must travel on, and ever find inferiority? Is life, then, like a race-course, where a man must rapidly return when he has reached the utmost end? Does the good, the excellent, stand before us like a firm, unmoving goal, from which, with fleet horses, we are forced away the instant we appear to have attained it? Happier are they who strive for earthly wares! They find what they are seeking in its proper climate, or they buy it in the fair.

"Come, my darling boy!" cried he to Felix, who now ran frisking toward him: "be thou and remain thou all to me! Thou wert given me as a compensation for thy loved mother; thou wert to replace the second mother whom I meant for thee; and now thou hast a loss still greater to make good. Occupy my heart,

occupy my spirit, with thy beauty, thy loveliness, thy capabilities, and thy desire to use them!"

The boy was busied with a new plaything: his father tried to put it in a better state for him; just as he succeeded, Felix had lost all pleasure in it. "Thou art a true son of Adam!" cried Wilhelm. "Come, my child! Come, my brother! let us wander, playing without object, through the world, as we best may."

His resolution to remove, to take the boy along with him, and recreate his mind by looking at the world, had now assumed a settled form. He wrote to Werner for the necessary cash and letters of credit; sending Friedrich's courier on the message, with the strictest charges to return immediately. Much as the conduct of his other friends had grieved him, his relation to Natalia remained serene and clear as ever.

He confided to her his intention. She took it as a settled thing that he would go; and, if this seeming carelessness in her chagrined him, her kindly manner and her presence made him calm. She counselled him to visit various towns, that he might get acquainted with certain of her friends. The courier returned, and brought the letter which our friend required; though Werner did not seem content with this new whim. "My hope that thou wert growing reasonable," so the letter ran, "is now again deferred. Where are you all gadding? And where lingers the lady who thou saidst was to assist us in arranging these affairs? Thy other friends are also absent. They have thrown the whole concern upon the shoulders of the lawyer and myself. Happy that he is as expert a jurist as I am a financier, and that both of us are used to business. Fare thee well! Thy aberrations shall be pardoned thee, since but for them our situation here could not have been so favourable."

So far as outward matters were concerned, Wilhelm might now have entered on his journey; but there were

still for his heart two hindrances that held him fast. In the first place, they flatly refused to show him Mignon's body till the funeral the abbé meant to celebrate; and, for this solemnity, the preparations were not ready. There had also been a curious letter from the country clergyman, in consequence of which the doctor had gone off. It related to the harper, of whose fate Wilhelm wanted to have further information.

In these circumstances, day or night he found no rest for mind or body. When all were asleep, he wandered up and down the house. The presence of the pictures and statues, which he knew so well of old, alternately attracted and repelled him. Nothing that surrounded him could he lay hold of or let go; all things reminded him of all: the whole ring of his existence lay before him; but it was broken into fragments, and seemed as if it would never unite again. These works of art, which his father had sold, appeared to him an omen that he himself was destined never to obtain a lasting, calm possession of anything desirable in life, or always to be robbed of it so soon as gained, by his own or other people's blame. He waded so deep in these strange and dreary meditations, that often he almost thought himself a disembodied spirit; and, even when he felt and handled things without him, he could scarcely keep himself from doubting whether he was really there and alive.

Nothing but the piercing grief which often seized him, but the tears he shed at being forced, by causes frivolous as they were irresistible, to leave the good which he had found, and found after having lost it, restored him to the feeling of his earthly life. It was in vain to call before his mind his happy state in other respects. "All is nothing, then," exclaimed he, "if the one blessing, which appears to us worth all the rest, is wanting!"

The abbé told the company that the marchese was arrived. "You have determined, it appears," said he to Wilhelm, "to set out upon your travels with your boy alone. Get acquainted with this nobleman, however: he will be useful to you if you meet him by the way." The marchese entered. He was a person not yet very far advanced in years, — a fine, handsome, pleasing, Lombard figure. In his youth, while in the army and afterward in public business, he had known Lothario's uncle; they had subsequently travelled through the greater part of Italy together: and many of the works of art, which the marchese now again fell in with, had been purchased in his presence, and under various happy circumstances, which he still distinctly recollected.

The Italians have in general a deeper feeling for the high dignity of art than any other nation. In Italy, whoever follows the employment tries to pass at once for artist, master, and professor; by which pretensions he acknowledges at least that it is not sufficient merely to lay hold of some transmitted excellency, or to acquire by practice some dexterity, but that a man who aims at art should have the power to think of what he does, to lay down principles, and make apparent to himself and others how and wherefore he proceeds in this way or in that.

The stranger was affected at again beholding these productions when the owner of them was no more, and cheered to see the spirit of his friend surviving in the gifted persons left behind him. They discussed a series of works: they found a lively satisfaction in the harmony of their ideas. The marchese and the abbé were the speakers; Natalia felt herself again transported to the presence of her uncle, and could enter without difficulty unto their opinions and criticisms; Wilhelm could not understand them, except as he translated their technology into dramatic language. Friedrich's

facetious vein was sometimes rather difficult to keep in check. Jarno was seldom there.

It being observed that excellent works of art were very rare in latter times, it was remarked by the marchese, "We can hardly think or estimate how many circumstances must combine in favour of the artist: with the greatest genius, with the most decisive talent, the demands which he must make upon himself are infinite, the diligence required in cultivating his endowments is unspeakable. Now, if circumstances are not in his favour, if he observe that the world is very easy to be satisfied, requiring but a slight, pleasing, transitory show, it were matter of surprise if indolence and selfishness did not keep him fixed at mediocrity: it were strange if he did not rather think of bartering modish wares for gold and praises than of entering on the proper path, which could not fail in some degree to lead him to a sort of painful martyrdom. Accordingly, the artists of our time are always offering and never giving. They always aim at charming, and they never satisfy: everything is merely indicated; you can nowhere find foundation or completion. Those for whom they labour, it is true, are little better. If you wait awhile in any gallery of pictures, and observe what works attract the many, what are praised and what neglected, you have little pleasure in the present, little hope in the future."

"Yes," replied the abbé: "and thus it is that artists and their judges mutually form each other. The latter ask for nothing but a general, vague enjoyment; a work of art is to delight them almost as a work of nature; they imagine that the organs for enjoying works of art may be cultivated altogether of themselves, like the tongue and the palate; they try a picture or a poem as they do an article of food. They do not understand how very different a species of culture it requires to raise one to the true enjoyment

of art. The hardest part of it, in my opinion, is that sort of separation which a man that aims at perfect culture must accomplish in himself. It is on this account that we observe so many people partially cultivated, and yet every one of them attempting to pronounce upon the general whole."

"Your last remark is not quite clear to me," said Jarno, who came in just then.

"It would be difficult," replied the abbé, "to explain it fully without a long detail. Thus much I may say: When any man pretends to mix in manifold activity or manifold enjoyment, he must also be enabled, as it were, to make his organs manifold, and independent of each other. Whoever aims at doing or enjoying all and everything with his entire nature, whoever tries to link together all that is without him by such a species of enjoyment, will only lose his time in efforts that can never be successful. How difficult, though it seems so easy, is it to contemplate a noble disposition, a fine picture, simply in and for itself; to watch the music for the music's sake; to admire the actor in the actor; to take pleasure in a building for its own peculiar harmony and durability. Most men are wont to treat a work of art, though fixed and done, as if it were a piece of soft clay. The hard and polished marble is again to mould itself, the firm-walled edifice is to contract or to expand itself, according as their inclinations, sentiments, and whims may dictate: the picture is to be instructive, the play to make us better, — everything is to do all. The reason is, that most men are themselves uninformed, they cannot give themselves and their being any certain shape; and thus they strive to take from other things their proper shape, that all they have to do with may be loose and wavering like themselves. Everything is, in the long run, reduced by them to what they call effect: everything is relative, say they; and so, indeed, it is:

everything with them grows relative, except absurdity and platitude, which truly are absolute enough."

"I understand you," answered Jarno; "or, rather, I perceive how what you have been saying follows from the principles you hold so fast by. Yet with men, poor devils, we should not go to quest so strictly. I know enow of them in truth, who, beside the greatest works of art and nature, forthwith recollect their own most paltry insufficiency; who take their conscience and their morals with them to the opera; who bethink them of their loves and hatreds in contemplating a colonnade. The best and greatest that can be presented to them from without, they must first, as far as possible, diminish in their way of representing it, that they may in any measure be enabled to combine it with their own sorry nature."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE abbé called them in the evening to attend the exequies of Mignon. The company proceeded to the Hall of the Past: they found it magnificently ornamented and illuminated. The walls were hung with azure tapestry almost from ceiling to floor, so that nothing but the friezes and socles, above and below, were visible. On the four candelabras in the corner large wax-lights were burning: smaller lights were in the four smaller candelabras placed by the sarcophagus in the middle. Near this stood four boys, dressed in azure with silver: they had broad fans of ostrich-feathers, which they waved above a figure that was resting upon the sarcophagus. The company sat down: two invisible choruses began in a soft, musical recitative to ask, "Whom bring ye us to the still dwelling?" The four boys replied with lovely voices, "'Tis a tired playmate whom we bring you: let her rest in your still dwelling, till the songs of her heavenly sisters once more awaken her."

CHORUS.

"Firstling of youth in our circle, we welcome thee! With sadness welcome thee! May no boy, no maiden, follow! Let age only, willing and composed, approach the silent hall, and in the solemn company, repose this one dear child!

BOYS.

Ah, reluctantly we brought her hither! Ah, and she is to remain here! Let us, too, remain: let us weep, let us weep upon her bier!

CHORUS.

Yet look at the strong wings; look at the light, clear robe. How glitters the golden band upon her head! Look at the beautiful, the noble, repose.

BOYS.

Ah! the wings do not raise her; in the frolic game, her robe flutters to and fro no more; when we bound her head with roses, her looks on us were kind and friendly.

CHORUS.

Cast forward the eye of the spirit. Awake in your souls the imaginative power, which carries forth what is fairest, what is highest, life, away beyond the stars.

BOYS.

But, ah! We find her not here; in the garden she wanders not; the flowers of the meadow she plucks no longer. Let us weep, we are leaving her here! Let us weep, and remain with her!

CHORUS.

Children, turn back into life! Your tears let the fresh air dry, which plays upon the rushing water. Flee from night! Day and pleasure and continuance are the lot of the living.

BOYS.

Up! Turn back into life! Let the day give us labour and pleasure, till the evening brings us rest and the nightly sleep refreshes us.

CHORUS.

Children! Hasten into life! In the pure garments of beauty, may Love meet you with heavenly looks and with the wreath of immortality!"

The boys had retired: the abbé rose from his seat, and went behind the bier. "It is the appointment," said he, "of the man who prepared this silent abode, that each new tenant of it shall be introduced with a solemnity. After him, the builder of this mansion, the founder of this establishment, we have next brought a young stranger hither; and thus already does this little space contain two altogether different victims of the rigorous, arbitrary, and inexorable Death-goddess. By appointed laws we enter into life: the days are numbered which make us ripe to see the light, but for the duration of our life there is no law. The weakest thread will spin itself to unexpected length; and the strongest is cut suddenly asunder by the scissors of the Fates, delighting, as it seems, in contradictions. Of the child whom we have here committed to her final rest, we can say but little. It is still uncertain whence she came; her parents we know not; the years of her life we can only conjecture. Her deep and closely shrouded soul allowed us scarce to guess at its interior movements: there was nothing clear in her, nothing open but her affection for the man who had snatched her from the hands of a barbarian. This impassioned tenderness, this vivid gratitude, appeared to be the flame which consumed the oil of her life: the skill of the physician could not save that fair life, the most anxious friendship could not lengthen it. But, if art could not stay the departing spirit, it has done its utmost to preserve the body, and withdraw it from decay. A balsamic substance has been forced through all the veins, and now tinges, in place of blood, these cheeks too early faded. Come near, my friends, and view this wonder of art and care!"

He raised the veil: the child was lying in her angel's dress, as if asleep, in the most soft and graceful posture. They approached, and admired this show of

life. Wilhelm alone continued sitting in his place; he was not able to compose himself: what he felt he durst not think, and every thought seemed ready to destroy his feeling.

For the sake of the marchese, the speech had been pronounced in French. That nobleman came forward with the rest, and viewed the figure with attention. The abbé thus proceeded. "With a holy confidence, this kind heart, shut up to men, was continually turned to its God. Humility, nay, an inclination to abase herself externally, seemed natural to her. She clave with zeal to the Catholic religion, in which she had been born and educated. Often she expressed a still wish to sleep on consecrated ground; and, according to the usage of the Church, we have, therefore, consecrated this marble coffin, and the little earth which is hidden in the cushion that supports her head. With what ardour did she, in her last moments, kiss the image of the Crucified, which stood beautifully figured on her tender arm, with many hundred points!" So saying, he stripped up her right sleeve; and a crucifix, with marks and letters round it, showed itself in blue upon the white skin.

The marchese looked at this with eagerness, stooping down to view it more intensely. "O God!" cried he, as he stood upright, and raised his hands to heaven. "Poor child! Unhappy niece! Do I meet thee here? What a painful joy to find thee, whom we had long lost hope of; to find this dear frame, which we had long believed the prey of fishes in the ocean, here preserved, though lifeless! I assist at thy funeral, splendid in its external circumstances, still more splendid from the noble persons who attend thee to thy place of rest. And to these," added he, with a faltering voice, "so soon as I can speak, I will express my thanks."

Tears hindered him from saying more. By the pressure of a spring, the abbé sank the body into the

cavity of the marble. Four youths, dressed as the boys had been, came out from behind the tapestry, and lifting the heavy, beautifully ornamented lid upon the coffin, thus began their song.

THE YOUTHS.

"Well is the treasure now laid up, — the fair image of the Past! Here sleeps it in the marble, undecaying: in your hearts, too, it lives, it works. Travel, travel back into life. Take along with you this holy earnestness, for earnestness alone makes life eternity."

The invisible chorus joined in with the last words, but no one heard the strengthening sentiment; all were too much busied with themselves, and the emotions which these wonderful disclosures had excited. The abbé and Natalia conducted the marchese out: Theresa and Lothario walked by Wilhelm. It was not till the music had altogether died away, that their sorrows, thoughts, meditations, curiosity, again fell on them with all their force, and made them long to be transported back into that exalting scene.

CHAPTER IX.

THE marchese avoided speaking of the matter, but had long, secret conversations with the abbé. When the company was met, he often asked for music, — a request to which they willingly assented, as each was glad to be delivered from the charge of talking. Thus they lived for some time, till it was observed that he was making preparations for departure. One day he said to Wilhelm, "I wish not to disturb the remains of this beloved child; let her rest in the place where she loved and suffered: but her friends must promise to visit me in her native country, in the scene where she was born and bred; they must see the pillars and statues, of which a dim idea remained with her. I will lead you to the bays where she liked so well to roam, and gather pebbles. You, at least, young friend, shall not escape the gratitude of a family that stands so deeply indebted to you. To-morrow I set out on my journey. The abbé is acquainted with the whole history of this matter: he will tell it you again. He could pardon me when grief interrupted my recital: as a third party, he will be enabled to narrate the incidents with more connection. If, as the abbé had proposed, you like to follow me in travelling over Germany, you shall be heartily welcome. Leave not your boy behind: at every little inconvenience which he causes us, we will again remember your attentive care of my poor niece."

The same evening our party was surprised by the arrival of the countess. Wilhelm trembled in every joint as she entered: she herself, though forewarned,

kept close by her sister, who speedily reached her a chair. How singularly simple was her attire, how altered was her form! Wilhelm scarcely dared to look at her: she saluted him with a kindly air; a few general words addressed to him did not conceal her sentiments and feelings. The marchese had retired betimes; and, as the company was not disposed to part so early, the abbé now produced a manuscript. "The singular narrative which was entrusted to me," said he, "I forthwith put on paper. The case where pen and ink should least of all be spared, is in recording the particular circumstances of remarkable events." They informed the countess of the matter; and the abbé read as follows, in the name of the marchese:

"Many men as I have seen, I still regard my father as a very extraordinary person. His character was noble and upright; his ideas were enlarged, I may even say great; to himself he was severe: in all his plans there was a rigid order, in all operations an unbroken perseverance. In one sense, therefore, it was easy to transact and live with him: yet, owing to the very qualities which made it so, he never could accommodate himself to life; for he required from the state, from his neighbours, from his children, and his servants, the observance of all the laws which he had laid upon himself. His most moderate demands became exorbitant by his rigour; and he never could attain to enjoyment, for nothing ever was completed as he had forecast it. At the moment when he was erecting a palace, laying out a garden, or acquiring a large estate in the highest cultivation, I have seen him inwardly convinced, with the sternest ire, that Fate had doomed him to do nothing but abstain and suffer. In his exterior he maintained the greatest dignity: if he jested, it was but displaying the preponderancy of his understanding. Censure was intolerable to him: the only time I ever saw him quite transported with rage

was once when he heard that one of his establishments was spoken of as something ludicrous. In the same spirit he had settled the disposal of his children and his fortune. My eldest brother was educated as a person that had large estates to look for. I was to embrace the clerical profession: the youngest was to be a soldier. I was of a lively temper, fiery, active, quick, apt for corporeal exercises: the youngest rather seemed inclined to an enthusiastic quietism, — devoted to the sciences, to music, and poetry. It was not till after the hardest struggle, the maturest conviction of the impossibility of his project, that our father, still reluctantly, agreed to let us change vocations; and, although he saw us both contented, he could never suit himself to this arrangement, but declared that nothing good would come of it. The older he grew, the more isolated did he feel from all society. At last he came to live almost entirely alone. One old friend, who had served in the German armies, who had lost his wife in the campaign, and brought a daughter of about ten years of age along with him, remained his only visitor. This person bought a fine little property beside us; he used to come and see my father on stated days of the week, and at stated hours; his little daughter often came along with him. He was never heard to contradict my father, who at length grew perfectly habituated to him, and endured him as the only tolerable company he had. After our father's death, we easily observed that this old gentleman had not been visiting for naught, — that his compliances had been rewarded by an ample settlement. He enlarged his estates: his daughter might expect a handsome portion. The girl grew up, and was extremely beautiful: my elder brother often joked with me about her, saying I should go and court her.

"Meanwhile brother Augustin, in the seclusion of his cloister, had been spending his years in the strangest

state of mind. He abandoned himself wholly to the feeling of a holy enthusiasm, to those half-spiritual, half-physical emotions which as they for a time exalted him to the third heaven, erelong sank him down to an abyss of powerlessness and vacant misery. While my father lived, no change could be contemplated: what, indeed, could we have asked for or proposed? After the old man's death, our brother visited us frequently: his situation, which at first afflicted us, in time became much more tolerable; for his reason had at length prevailed. But, the more confidently reason promised him complete recovery and contentment on the pure path of nature, the more vehemently did he require of us to free him from his vows. His thoughts, he let us know, were turned upon Sperata, our fair neighbour.

"My elder brother had experienced too much suffering from the harshness of our father to look on the condition of the youngest without sympathy. He spoke with the family confessor, a worthy old man: we signified to him the double purpose of our brother, and requested him to introduce and expedite the business. Contrary to custom he delayed; and at last, when Augustin pressed us, and we recommended the affair more keenly to the clergyman, he had nothing left but to impart the strange secret to us.

"Sperata was our sister, and that by both her parents. Our mother had declared herself with child at a time when both she and our father were advanced in years: a similar occurrence had shortly before been made the subject of some merriment in our neighbourhood; and our father, to avoid such ridicule, determined to conceal this late lawful fruit of love as carefully as people use to conceal its earlier accidental fruits. Our mother was delivered secretly: the child was carried to the country; and the old friend of the family, who, with the confessor, had alone been trusted

with the secret, easily engaged to give her out for his daughter. The confessor had reserved the right of disclosing the secret in case of extremity. The supposed father was now dead: Sperata was living with an old lady; we were aware that a love of song and music had already led our brother to her; and on his again requiring us to undo his former bond, that he might engage himself by a new one, it was necessary that we should, as soon as possible, apprise him of the danger he stood in.

"He viewed us with a wild, contemptuous look. 'Spare your idle tales,' cried he, 'for children and credulous fools: from me, from my heart, they shall not tear Sperata; she is mine. Recall, I pray you, instantly, your frightful spectre, which would but harass me in vain. Sperata is not my sister: she is my wife!' He described to us, in rapturous terms, how this heavenly girl had drawn him out of his unnatural state of separation from his fellow creatures into true life; how their spirits accorded like their voices; how he blessed his sufferings and errors, since they had kept clear of him women, till the moment when he wholly and for ever gave himself to this most amiable being. We were shocked at the discovery, we deplored his situation, but we knew not how to help ourselves; for he declared, with violence, that Sperata was with a child by him. Our confessor did whatever duty could suggest to him, but by this means he only made the evil worse. The demands of nature and religion, moral rights and civil laws, were vehemently attacked and spurned at by our brother. He considered nothing holy but his relation to Sperata, nothing dignified but the names of father and wife. 'These alone,' cried he, 'are suitable to nature: all else is caprice and opinion. Were there not noble nations which admitted marriage with a sister? Name not your gods! You never name

them but when you wish to befool us, to lead us from the paths of nature, and, by scandalous constraint, to transform the noblest inclinations into crimes. Unspeakable are the perplexities, abominable the abuses, into which you force the victims whom you bury alive.

"'I may speak, for I have suffered like no other, — from the highest, sweetest feeling of enthusiasm, to the frightful deserts of utter powerlessness, vacancy, annihilation, and despair; from the loftiest aspirations of preternatural existence, to the most entire unbelief, — unbelief in myself. All these horrid grounds of the cup, so flattering at the brim, I have drained; and my whole being was poisoned to its core. And now, when kind Nature, by her greatest gift, by love, has healed me; now, when in the arms of a heavenly creature I again feel that I am, that she is, that out of this living union a third shall arise and smile in our faces, — now ye open up the flames of your hell, of your purgatory, which can only singe a sick imagination: ye oppose them to the vivid, true, indestructible enjoyment of pure love. Meet us under these cypresses, which turn their solemn tops to heaven; visit us among those espaliers where the citrons and pomegranates bloom beside us, where the graceful myrtle stretches out its tender flowers to us, — and then venture to disturb us with your dreary, paltry nets which men have spun!'

"Thus for a long time he persisted in a stubborn disbelief of our story; and when we assured him of its truth, when the confessor himself asseverated it, he did not let it drive him from his point. 'Ask not the echoes of your cloisters, not your mouldering parchments, not your narrow whims and ordinances! Ask Nature and your heart: she will teach you what you should recoil from; she will point out to you with the strictest finger over what she has pronounced

her everlasting curse. Look at the lilies: do not husband and wife shoot forth on the same stalk? Does not the flower which bore them hold them both? And is not the lily the type of innocence? Is not their sisterly union fruitful? When Nature abhors, she speaks it aloud; the creature that shall not be, is not produced; the creature that lives with a false life, is soon destroyed. Unfruitfulness, painful existence, early destruction, these are her curses, the marks of her displeasure. It is only by immediate consequences that she punishes. Look around you; and what is prohibited, what is accursed, will force itself upon your notice. In the silence of the convent, in the tumult of the world, a thousand practices are consecrated and revered, while her curse rests on them. On stagnant idleness as on overstrained toil, on caprice and superfluity as on constraint and want, she looks down with mournful eyes; her call is to moderation; true are all her commandments, peaceful all her influences. The man who has suffered as I have done, has a right to be free. Sperata is mine: death alone shall take her from me. How I shall retain her, how I may be happy, these are your cares. This instant I go to her, and part from her no more.'

"He was for proceeding to the boat, and crossing over to her: we restrained him, entreating that he would not take a step which might produce the most tremendous consequences. He should recollect, we told him, that he was not living in the free world of his own thoughts and ideas, but in a constitution of affairs, the ordinances and conditions of which had become as inflexible as laws of nature. The confessor made us promise not to let him leave our sight, still less our house: after this he went away, engaging to return erelong. What we had foreseen took place: reason had made our brother strong, but his heart was weak; the earlier impressions of religion rose on him,

and dreadful doubts along with them. He passed two fearful nights and days; the confessor came again to his assistance, but in vain. His enfranchised understanding acquitted him: his feelings, religion, all his usual ideas, declared him guilty.

"One morning we found his chamber empty: on the table lay a note, in which he signified, that, as we kept him prisoner by force, he felt himself entitled to provide for his freedom; that he meant to go directly to Sperata; he expected to escape with her, and was prepared for the most terrible extremities should any separation be attempted.

"The news, of course, affrighted us exceedingly; but the confessor bade us be at rest. Our poor brother had been narrowly enough observed: the boatman, in place of taking him across, proceeded with him to his cloister. Fatigued with watching for the space of four and twenty hours, he fell asleep, as the skiff began to rock him in the moonshine; and he did not awake till he saw himself in the hands of his spiritual brethren: he did not recover from his amazement till he heard the doors of the convent bolting behind him.

"Sharply touched at the fate of our brother, we reproached the confessor for his cruelty; but he soon silenced or convinced us by the surgeon's reason, that our pity was destructive to the patient. He let us know that he was not acting on his own authority, but by order of the bishop and his chapter; that by this proceeding they intended to avoid all public scandal, and to shroud the sad occurrence under the veil of a secret course of discipline prescribed by the Church. Our sister they would spare: she was not to be told that her lover was her brother. The charge of her was given to a priest, to whom she had before disclosed her situation. They contrived to hide her pregnancy and her delivery. As a mother she felt

altogether happy in her little one. Like most of our women, she could neither write, nor read writing: she gave the priest many verbal messages to carry to her lover. The latter, thinking that he owed this pious fraud to a suckling mother, often brought pretended tidings from our brother, whom he never saw; recommending her, in his name, to be at peace; begging of her to be careful of herself and of her child, and for the rest to trust in God.

"Sperata was inclined by nature to religious feelings. Her situation, her solitude, increased this tendency: the clergyman encouraged it, in order to prepare her by degrees for an eternal separation. Scarcely was her child weaned, scarcely did he think her body strong enough for suffering agony of mind, when he began to paint her fault to her in most terrific colours, to treat the crime of being connected with a priest as a sort of sin against nature, as a sort of incest. For he had taken up the strange thought of making her repentance equal in intensity to what it would have been had she known the true circumstances of her error. He thereby produced so much anxiety and sorrow in her mind; he so exalted the idea of the Church and of its head before her; showed her the awful consequences, for the weal of all men's souls, should indulgence in a case like this be granted, and the guilty pair rewarded by a lawful union; signifying, too, how wholesome it was to expiate such sins in time, and thereby gain the crown of immortality, — that at last, like a poor criminal, she willingly held out her neck to the axe, and earnestly entreated that she might for ever be divided from our brother. Having gained so much, the clergy left her the liberty (reserving to themselves a certain distant oversight) to live at one time in a convent, at another in her house, according as she afterward thought good.

"Her little girl, meanwhile, was growing: from her

earliest years she had displayed an extraordinary disposition. When still very young, she could run and move with wonderful dexterity: she sang beautifully, and learned to play upon the cithern almost of herself. With words, however, she could not express herself; and the impediment seemed rather to proceed from her mode of thought than from her organs of speech. The feelings of the poor mother to her, in the meantime, were of the most painful kind; the expostulations of the priest had so perplexed her mind, that, though she was not quite deranged, her state was far from being sane. She daily thought her crime more terrible and punishable: the clergyman's comparison of incest, frequently repeated, had impressed itself so deeply, that her horror was not less than if the actual circumstances had been known to her. The priest took no small credit for his ingenuity, with which he had contrived to tear asunder a luckless creature's heart. It was miserable to behold maternal love, ready to expand itself in joy at the existence of her child, contending with the frightful feeling that this child should not exist. The two emotions warred with each other in her soul: love was often weaker than aversion.

"The child had long ago been taken from her, and committed to a worthy family residing on the seashore. In the greater freedom which the little creature enjoyed here, she soon displayed her singular delight in climbing. To mount the highest peaks, to run along the edges of the ships, to imitate in all their strangest feats the rope-dancers whom she often saw in the place, seemed a natural tendency in her.

"To practise these things with the greater ease, she liked to change clothes with boys; and, though her foster-parents thought this highly blamable and unbecoming, we bade them indulge her as much as possible. Her wild walks and leapings often led

her to a distance: she would lose her way, and be long from home, but she always came back. In general, as she returned, she used to set herself beneath the columns in the portal of a country house in the neighbourhood: her people now had ceased to look for her; they waited for her. She would there lie resting on the steps, then run up and down the large hall, looking at the statues; after which, if nothing specially detained her, she used to hasten home.

"But at last our confidence was balked, and our indulgence punished. The child went out, and did not come again: her little hat was found swimming on the water near the spot where a torrent rushes down into the sea. It was conjectured that, in clambering among the rocks, her foot had slipped: all our searching could not find the body.

"The thoughtless tattle of her housemates soon communicated the occurrence to Sperata: she seemed calm and cheerful when she heard it; hinting not obscurely at her satisfaction that God had pleased to take her poor child to himself, and thus preserved it from suffering, or causing some more dreadful misery.

"On this occasion all the fables which are told about our waters came to be the common talk. The sea, it was said, required every year an innocent child: yet it would endure no corpse, but sooner or later throw it to the shore; nay, the last joint, though sunk to the lowest bottom, must again come forth. They told the story of a mother, inconsolable because her child had perished in the sea, who prayed to God and his saints to grant her at least the bones for burial. The first storm threw ashore the skull, the next the spine; and, after all was gathered, she wrapped the bones in a cloth, and took them to the church: but, oh! miraculous to tell! as she crossed the threshold of the temple, the packet grew heavier and heavier: and at last, when she laid it on the steps of the altar, the child

began to cry, and issued living from the cloth. One joint of the right-hand little finger was alone wanting: this, too, the mother anxiously sought and found; and, in memory of the event, it was preserved among the other relics of the church.

"On poor Sperata these recitals made a deep impression: her imagination took a new flight, and favoured the emotion of her heart. She supposed that now the child had expiated, by its death, both its own sins and the sins of its parents; that the curse and penalty which hitherto had overhung them all was at length wholly removed; that nothing more was necessary could she only find the child's bones, that she might carry them to Rome, where, upon the steps of the great altar in St. Peter's, her little girl, again covered with its fair, fresh skin, would stand up alive before the people. With its own eyes it would once more look on father and mother; and the Pope, convinced that God and his saints commanded it, would, amid the acclamations of the people, remit the parents their sins, acquit them of their oaths, and join their hands in wedlock.

"Her looks and her anxiety were henceforth constantly directed to the sea and the beach. When at night, in the moonshine, the waves were tossing to and fro, she thought every glittering sheet of foam was bringing out her child; and some one about her had to run off, as if to take it up when it should reach the shore.

"By day she walked unweariedly along the places where the pebbly beach shelved slowly to the water: she gathered in a little basket all the bones she could find. None durst tell her that they were the bones of animals: the larger ones she buried, the little ones she took along with her. In this employment she incessantly persisted. The clergyman, who, by so unremittingly discharging what he thought his duty, had

reduced her to this condition, now stood up for her with all his might. By his influence the people in the neighbourhood were made to look upon her, not as a distracted person, but as one entranced: they stood in reverent attitudes as she walked by, and the children ran to kiss her hand.

"To the old woman, her attendant and faithful friend, the secret of Sperata's guilt was at length imparted by the priest, on her solemnly engaging to watch over the unhappy creature, with untiring care, through all her life. And she kept this engagement to the last, with admirable conscientiousness and patience.

"Meanwhile we had always had an eye upon our brother. Neither the physicians nor the clergy of his convent would allow us to be seen by him; but, in order to convince us of his being well in some sort, we had leave to look at him as often as we liked in the garden, the passages, or even through a window in the roof of his apartment.

"After many terrible and singular changes, which I shall omit, he had passed into a strange state of mental rest and bodily unrest. He never sat but when he took his harp and played upon it, and then he usually accompanied it with singing. At other times he kept continually in motion; and in all things he was grown extremely guidable and pliant, for all his passions seemed to have resolved themselves into the single fear of death. You could persuade him to do anything by threatening him with dangerous sickness or with death.

"Besides this singularity of walking constantly about the cloister, a practice which he hinted it were better to exchange for wandering over hill and dale, he talked about an apparition which perpetually tormented him. He declared that, on awakening at whatever hour of the night, he saw a beautiful boy standing

at the foot of his bed, with a bare knife, and threatening to destroy him. They shifted him to various other chambers of the convent, but he still asserted that the boy pursued him. His wandering to and fro became more unrestful: the people afterward remembered, too, that at this time they had often seen him stand at the window, and look out upon the sea.

"Our poor sister, on the other hand, seemed gradually wasting under the consuming influence of her single thought, of her narrow occupation. It was at last proposed by the physician, that, among the bones she had gathered, the fragments of a child's skeleton should by degrees be introduced, and so the hapless mother's hopes kept up. The experiment was dubious; but this at least seemed likely to be gained by it, that, when all the parts were got together, she would cease her weary search, and might be entertained with hopes of going to Rome.

"It was accordingly resolved on. Her attendant changed, by imperceptible degrees, the small remains committed to her with the bones Sperata found. An inconceivable delight arose in the poor, sick woman's heart, when the parts began to fit each other, and the shape of those still wanting could be marked. She had fastened every fragment in its proper place with threads and ribbons; filling up the vacant spaces with embroidery and silk, as is usually done with the relics of saints.

"In this way nearly all the bones had been collected: none but a few of the extremities were wanting. One morning, while she was asleep, the physician having come to ask for her, the old attendant, with a view to show him how his patient occupied herself, took away these dear remains from the little chest where they lay in poor Sperata's bedroom. A few minutes afterward they heard her spring upon the floor: she lifted up the cloth, and found the chest empty. She

threw herself upon her knees; they came and listened to her joyful, ardent prayer. 'Yes,' exclaimed she, 'it is true! it was no dream, it is real! Rejoice with me, my friends! I have seen my own beautiful, good little girl again alive. She arose and threw the veil from off her; her splendour enlightened all the room; her beauty was transfigured to celestial loveliness; she could not tread the ground, although she wished it. Lightly was she borne aloft: she had not even time to stretch her hand to me. "*There!*" cried she to me, and pointed to the road where I am soon to go. Yes, I will follow her, — soon follow her: my heart is light to think of it. My sorrows are already vanished: the sight of my risen little one has given me a foretaste of the heavenly joys.'

"From that time her soul was wholly occupied with prospects of the brightest kind; she gave no further heed to any earthly object; she took but little food; her spirit by degrees cast off the fetters of the body. At last this imperceptible gradation reached its head unexpectedly: her attendants found her pale and motionless; she opened not her eyes; she was what we call dead.

"The report of her vision quickly spread abroad among the people; and the reverential feeling, which she had excited in her lifetime, soon changed, at her death, to the thought that she should be regarded as in bliss, — nay, as in sanctity.

"When we were bearing her to be interred, a crowd of persons pressed with boundless violence about the bier: they would touch her hand, they would touch her garment. In this impassioned elevation, various sick persons ceased to feel the pains by which at other times they were tormented: they looked upon themselves as healed; they declared it; they praised God and his new saint. The clergy were obliged to lay the body in a neighbouring chapel: the people called for

opportunity to offer their devotion. The concourse was incredible: the mountaineers, at all times prone to lively and religious feelings, crowded forward from their valleys; the reverence, the wonder, the adoration, daily spread, and gathered strength. The ordinances of the bishop, which were meant to limit, and in time abolish, this new worship, could not be put in execution: every show of opposition raised the people into tumults; every unbeliever they were ready to assail with personal violence. 'Did not Saint Borromæus,' cried they, 'dwell among our forefathers? Did not his mother live to taste the joy of his canonisation? Was not that great figure on the rocks at Arona meant to represent to us, by a sensible symbol, his spiritual greatness? Do not the descendants of his kindred live among us to this hour? And has not God promised ever to renew his miracles among a people that believe?'

"As the body, after several days, exhibited no marks of putrefaction, but grew whiter, and, as it were, translucent, the general faith rose higher and higher. Among the multitude were several cures which even the skeptical observer was unable to account for, or ascribe entirely to fraud. The whole country was in motion: those who did not go to see it heard at least no other topic talked of.

"The convent where my brother lived resounded, like the land at large, with the noise of these wonders; and the people felt the less restraint in speaking of them in his presence, as in general he seemed to pay no heed to anything, and his connection with the circumstance was known to none of them. But on this occasion it appeared he had listened with attention. He conducted his escape with such dexterity and cunning, that the manner of it still remains a mystery. We learned afterward, that he had crossed the water with a number of travellers, and charged the boatmen,

who observed no other singularity about him, above all to have a care lest their vessel overset. Late in the night he reached the chapel, where his hapless loved one was resting from her woes. Only a few devotees were kneeling in the corners of the place: her old friend was sitting at the head of the corpse; he walked up to her, saluted her, and asked how her mistress was. 'You see it,' answered she, with some embarrassment. He looked at the corpse with a sidelong glance. After some delay he took its hand. Frightened by its coldness, he in the instant let it go: he looked unrestfully around him; then, turning to the old attendant, 'I cannot stay with her at present,' said he: 'I have a long, long way to travel; but at the proper time I shall be back: tell her so when she awakens.'

"With this he went away. It was awhile before we got intelligence of these occurrences: we searched, but all our efforts to discover him were vain. How he worked his way across the mountains none can say. A long time after he was gone we came upon a trace of him among the Grisons, but we were too late: it quickly vanished. We supposed that he was gone to Germany, but his weak footprints had been speedily obliterated by the war."

CHAPTER X.

THE abbé ceased to read. No one had listened without tears. The countess scarcely ever took her handkerchief from her eyes: at last she rose, and, with Natalia, left the room. The rest were silent, till the abbé thus began: "The question now arises, whether we shall let the good marchese leave us without telling him our secret. For who can doubt a moment that our harper and his brother Augustin are one? Let us consider what is to be done, both for the sake of that unhappy man himself and of his family. My advice is, not to hurry, but to wait till we have heard what news the doctor, who has gone to see him, brings us back."

All were of the same opinion; and the abbé thus proceeded: "Another question, which perhaps may be disposed of sooner, still remains. The marchese is affected to the bottom of his heart at the kindness which his poor niece experienced here, particularly from our young friend. He made me tell him again and again every circumstance connected with her, and he shows the liveliest gratitude. 'Her young benefactor,' he said, 'refused to travel with me, while he knew not the connection that subsists between us. I am not now a stranger, of whose manner of existence, of whose humours, he might be uncertain: I am his associate, his relation; and, as his unwillingness to leave his boy behind was the impediment which kept him from accompanying me, let this child now become a fairer bond to join us still more closely. Beyond the obli-

gations he has already placed me under, let him be of service to me on my present journey; let him, then, return along with me; my elder brother will receive him as he ought. And let him not despise the heritage of his unhappy foster-child; for, by a secret stipulation of our father with his military friend, the fortune which he gave Sperata has returned to us: and certainly we will not cheat our niece's benefactor of the recompense he has merited so well.'"

Theresa, taking Wilhelm by the hand, now said to him, "We have here another beautiful example that disinterested well-doing yields the highest and best return. Follow the call which so strangely comes to you, and, while you lay a double load of gratitude on the marchese, hasten to a fair land, which has already often drawn your heart and your imagination toward it."

"I leave myself entirely to the guidance of my friends and you," said Wilhelm: "it is vain to think, in this world, of adhering to our individual will. What I purposed to hold fast, I must let go; and benefits which I have not deserved descend upon me of their own accord."

Pressing Theresa's hand, Wilhelm took his own away. "I give you full permission," said he to the abbé, "to decide about me as you please. Since I shall not need to leave my Felix, I am ready to go anywhither, and to undertake whatever you think good."

Thus authorised, the abbé forthwith sketched out his plan. The marchese, he proposed, should be allowed to depart: Wilhelm was to wait for tidings from the doctor; he might then, when they had settled what was to be done, set off with Felix. Accordingly, under the pretence that Wilhelm's preparations for his journey would detain him, he advised the stranger to employ the meanwhile in examining the curiosities of the city, which he meant to visit. The marchese did

in consequence depart, and not without renewed and strong expressions of his gratitude; of which indeed the presents left by him, including jewels, precious stones, embroidered stuffs, afforded a sufficient proof.

Wilhelm, too, was at length in readiness for travelling; and his friends began to be distressed that the doctor sent them no news. They feared some mischief had befallen the poor old harper, at the very moment when they were in hopes of radically improving his condition. They sent the courier off; but he was scarcely gone, when the doctor in the evening entered with a stranger, whose form and aspect were expressive, earnest, striking, and whom no one knew. Both stood silent for a space: the stranger at length went up to Wilhelm, and, holding out his hand, said, "Do you no longer know your old friend?" It was the harper's voice, but of his form there seemed to remain no vestige. He was in the common garb of a traveller, cleanly and genteelly equipped; his beard had vanished; his hair was dressed with some attention to the mode; and what particularly made him quite irrecognisable was, that in his countenance the look of age was no longer visible. Wilhelm embraced him with the liveliest joy: he was presented to the rest, and behaved with great propriety, not knowing that the party had a little while before become so well acquainted with him. "You will have patience with a man," continued he, with great composure, "who, grown up as he appears, is entering on the world, after long sorrows, inexperienced as a child. To this skilful gentleman I stand indebted for the privilege of again appearing in the company of my fellow men."

They bade him welcome: the doctor motioned for a walk, to interrupt the conversation, and lead it to indifferent topics.

In private the doctor gave the following explanation: "It was by the strangest chance that we succeeded in

the cure of this man. We had long treated him, morally and physically, as our best consideration dictated: in some degree the plan was efficacious; but the fear of death continued powerful in him, and he would not lay aside his beard and cloak. For the rest, however, he appeared to take more interest in external things than formerly; and both his songs and his conceptions seemed to be approaching nearer life. A strange letter from the clergyman, as you already know, called me from you. I arrived: I found our patient altogether changed; he had voluntarily given up his beard; he had let his locks be cut into a customary form; he asked for common clothes; he seemed to have all at once become another man. Though curious to penetrate the reason of this sudden alteration, we did not risk inquiring of himself: at last we accidentally discovered it. A glass of laudanum was missing from the parson's private laboratory: we thought it right to institute a strict inquiry; every one endeavoured to ward off suspicion, and the sharpest quarrels rose among the inmates of the house. At last this man appeared before us, and admitted that he had the laudanum: we asked if he had swallowed any of it. 'No,' said he, 'but it is to this that I owe the recovery of my reason. It is at your choice to take the vial from me, and to drive me back, inevitably, to my former state. The feeling that it was desirable to see the pains of life terminated by death, first put me on the way of cure: before long the thought of terminating them by voluntary death arose in me, and with this intention I took the glass of poison. The possibility of casting off my load of griefs for ever gave me strength to bear them; and thus have I, ever since this talisman came into my possession, forced myself back into life by a contiguity with death. Be not anxious lest I use the drug, but resolve, as men acquainted with the human heart, by granting me an independence of

life, to make me properly and wholesomely dependent on it.' After mature consideration, we determined not to meddle further with him; and he now carries with him, in a firm little ground-glass vial, this poison, of which he has so strangely made an antidote."

The doctor was informed of all that had become known in the meantime: toward Augustin it was determined that they should observe the deepest silence in regard to it. The abbé undertook to keep beside him, and to lead him forward on the healthful path he had entered.

Meanwhile Wilhelm was to set about his journey over Germany with the marchese. If it should appear that Augustin could be again excited to affection for his native country, the circumstances were to be communicated to his friends, and Wilhelm might conduct him thither.

Wilhelm had at last made every preparation for his journey. At first the abbé thought it strange that Augustin rejoiced in hearing of his friend and benefactor's purpose to depart, but he soon discovered the foundation of this curious movement. Augustin could not subdue his fear of Felix; and he longed, as soon as possible, to see the boy removed.

By degrees so many people had assembled, that the castle and adjoining buildings could scarcely accommodate them all, and the less, as such a multitude of guests had not originally been anticipated. They breakfasted, they dined, together: each endeavoured to persuade himself that they were living in a comfortable harmony; but each, in secret, longed in some degree to be away. Theresa frequently rode out, attended by Lothario, and oftener alone: she had already got acquainted with all the landladies and landlords in the district; for she held it as a principle of her economy, in which, perhaps, she was not far mistaken, that it is essential to be in good acceptance with one's

neighbours, male and female, and to maintain with them a constant interchange of civilities. Of an intended marriage with Lothario, she appeared to have no thought. Natalia and the countess often talked with one another; the abbé seemed to covet the society of Augustin; Jarno had frequent conversations with the doctor; Friedrich held by Wilhelm; Felix ran about wherever he could meet with most amusement. It was thus, too, that in general they paired themselves in walking when the company broke up: when it was obliged to be together, recourse was quickly had to music, to unite them all by giving each back to himself.

Unexpectedly the count increased the party; intending to remove his lady, and, as it appeared, to take a solemn farewell of his worldly friends. Jarno hastened to the coach to meet him: the count inquired what guests they had; to which the other answered, in a fit of wild humour that would often seize him, "We have all the nobility in nature,—marcheses, marquises, milords, and barons: we wanted nothing but a count." They came up-stairs: Wilhelm was the first who met them in the antechamber. "Milord," said the count to him in French, after looking at him for a moment, "I rejoice very much in the unexpected pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with your lordship: I am very much mistaken if I did not see you at my castle in the prince's suite." "I had the happiness of waiting on your Excellence at that time," answered Wilhelm; "but you do me too much honour when you take me for an Englishman, and that of the first quality. I am a German, and—" "And a fine young fellow," interrupted Jarno. The count looked at Wilhelm with a smile, and was about to make some reply, when the rest of the party entered, and saluted him with many a friendly welcome. They excused themselves for being unable at the moment to show

him to a proper chamber, promising without delay to make the necessary room for him.

"Ay, ay!" said he, smiling: "we have left Chance, I see, to act as our purveyor. Yet with prudence and arrangement, how much is possible! For the present I entreat you not to stir a slipper from its place: the disorder, I perceive, would otherwise be great. Every one would be uncomfortably lodged; and this no one shall be on my account, if possible, not even for an hour. You can testify," said he to Jarno, "and you, too, Meister," turning to Wilhelm, "how many people I commodiously stowed that time in my castle. Let me have the list of persons and servants; let me see how they are lodged at present: I will make a plan of dislocation, such that, with the very smallest inconvenience, every one shall find a suitable apartment; and there shall be room enough to hold another guest if one should accidentally arrive."

Jarno at once offered the count his assistance, procured him all the necessary information; taking great delight, as usual, if he could now and then contrive to lead him astray, and leave him in awkward difficulties. The old gentleman at last, however, gained a signal triumph. The arrangement was completed: he caused the names to be written on their several doors, himself attending; and it could not be denied, that, by a very few changes and substitutions, the object had been fully gained. Jarno, among other things, had also managed, that the persons who at present took an interest in each other should be lodged together.

"Will you help me," said the count to Jarno, after everything was settled, "to clear up my recollections of the young man there, whom you call Meister, and who you tell me is a German?" Jarno was silent; for he knew very well that the count was one of those people who, in asking questions, merely wish to show their knowledge. The count, accordingly, continued,

without waiting for an answer, "You, I recollect, presented him to me, and warmly recommended him in the prince's name. If his mother was a German woman, I'll be bound for it his father is an Englishman, and one of rank too: who can calculate the English blood that has been flowing these last thirty years in German veins! I will not insist on knowing more: I know you have always family secrets of that kind, but in such cases it is in vain to think of cheating me." He then proceeded to detail a great variety of things as having taken place with Wilhelm at the castle, to the whole of which Jarno, as before, made no reply; though the count was altogether in the wrong, confounding Wilhelm more than once with a young Englishman of the prince's suite. The truth was, the good old gentleman had in former years possessed a very excellent memory, and was still proud of being able to remember the minutest circumstances of his youth; but, in regard to late occurrences, he used to settle in his mind as true, and utter with the greatest certainty, whatever fables and fantastic combinations, in the growing weakness of his powers, imagination might present to him. For the rest, he was become extremely mild and courteous: his presence had a very favourable influence upon the company. He would call on them to read some useful book together; nay, he often gave them little games, which, without participating in them, he directed with the greatest care. If they wondered at his condescension, he would reply, that it became a man who differed from the world in weighty matters to conform to it the more anxiously in matters of indifference.

In these games our friend had, more than once, an angry and unquiet feeling to endure. Friedrich, with his usual levity, took frequent opportunity of giving hints that Wilhelm entertained a secret passion for Natalia. How could he have found it out? What

entitled him to say so? And would not his friends think, that, as they two were often together, Wilhelm must have made a disclosure to him, — so thoughtless and unlucky a disclosure?

One day, while they were merrier than common at some such joke, Augustin, dashing up the door, rushed in with a frightful look; his countenance was pale, his eyes were wild; he seemed about to speak, but his tongue refused its office. The party were astounded: Lothario and Jarno, supposing that his madness had returned, sprang up and seized him. With a choked and faltering voice, then loudly and violently, he spoke, and cried, "Not me! Haste! Help! Save the child! Felix is poisoned!"

They let him go; he hastened through the door: all followed him in consternation. They called the doctor; Augustin made for the abbé's chamber; they found the child, who seemed amazed and frightened, when they called to him from a distance, "What hast thou been doing?"

"Dear papa!" cried Felix, "I did not drink from the bottle, I drank from the glass: I was very thirsty."

Augustin struck his hands together: "He is lost!" cried he, then pressed through the bystanders, and hastened away.

They found a glass of almond-milk upon the table, with a bottle near it more than half empty. The doctor came, was told what they had seen and heard: with horror he observed the well-known laudanum-vial lying empty on the table. He called for vinegar: he summoned all his art to his assistance.

Natalia had the little patient taken to a room: she busied herself with painful care about him. The abbé had run out to seek Augustin, and draw some explanation from him. The unhappy father had been out upon the same endeavour, but in vain: he returned, to find anxiety and fear on every face. The doctor,

in the meantime, had been examining the almond-milk in the glass; he found it to contain a powerful mixture of opium: the child was lying on the sofa, seeming very sick; he begged his father "not to let them pour more stuff into him, not to let them plague him any more." Lothario had sent his people, and had ridden off himself, endeavouring to find some trace of Augustin. Natalia sat beside the child; he took refuge in her lap, and entreated earnestly for her protection, earnestly for a little piece of sugar: the vinegar, he said, was biting sour. The doctor granted his request; the child was in a frightful agitation; they were obliged to let him have a moment's rest. The doctor said that every means had been adopted: he would continue to do his utmost. The count came near, with an air of displeasure; his look was earnest, even solemn; he laid his hands upon the child, turned his eyes to heaven, and remained some moments in that attitude. Wilhelm, who was lying inconsolable on a seat, sprang up, and, casting a despairing look at Natalia, left the room. Shortly afterward the count, too, left it.

"I cannot understand," said the doctor, having paused a little, "how it comes that there is not the smallest trace of danger visible about the child. At a single gulp he must have swallowed an immense dose of opium; yet I find no movement in his pulse but what may be ascribed to our remedies, and to the terror we have put him into."

In a few minutes Jarno entered, with intelligence that Augustin had been discovered in the upper story, lying in his blood: a razor had been found beside him; to all appearance he had cut his throat. The doctor hastened out; he met the people carrying down the body. The unhappy man was laid upon a bed, and accurately examined: the cut had gone across the windpipe; a copious loss of blood had been succeeded by a swoon; yet it was easy to observe that

life, that hope, was still there. The doctor put the body in a proper posture, joined the edges of the wound, and bandaged it. The night passed sleepless and full of care to all. Felix would not quit Natalia; Wilhelm sat before her on a stool; he had the boy's feet upon his lap; the head and breast were lying upon hers. Thus did they divide the pleasing burden and the painful anxiety, and continue, till the day broke, in their uncomfortable, sad position. Natalia had given her hand to Wilhelm; they did not speak a word; they looked at the child, and then at one another. Lothario and Jarno were sitting at the other end of the room, and carrying on a most important conversation, — which, did not the pressure of events forbid us, we would gladly lay before our readers. The boy slept softly: he awoke quite cheerful early in the morning, and demanded a piece of bread and butter.

So soon as Augustin had in some degree recovered, they endeavoured to obtain some explanation from him. They learned with difficulty, and by slow degrees, that having, by the count's unlucky shifting, been appointed to the same chamber with the abbé, he had found the manuscript in which his story was recorded. Struck with horror on perusing it, he felt that it was now impossible for him to live, on which he had recourse, as usual, to the laudanum: this he poured into a glass of almond milk, and raised it to his mouth; but he shuddered when it reached his lips: he set it down untasted, went out to walk once more across the garden, and behold the face of nature; and, on his return, he found the child employed in filling up the glass out of which it had been drinking.

They entreated the unhappy creature to be calm: he seized Wilhelm by the hand with a spasmodic grasp, and cried, "Ah! why did I not leave thee long ago? I knew well that I should kill the boy, and he me." "The boy lives!" said Wilhelm. The doctor, who had

listened with attention, now inquired of Augustin if all the drink was poisoned. "No," replied he, "nothing but the glass." "By the luckiest chance, then," cried the doctor, "the boy has drunk from the bottle! A benignant genius has guided his hand, that he did not catch at death, which stood so near and ready for him." "No, no!" cried Wilhelm, with a groan, and clapping both his hands upon his eyes. "How dreadful are the words! Felix said expressly that he drank, not from the bottle, but the glass. His health is but a show: he will die among our hands." Wilhelm hastened out: the doctor went below, and taking Felix up, with much caressing, asked, "Now, did not you, my pretty boy? You drank from the bottle, not the glass?" The child began to cry. The doctor secretly informed Natalia how the matter stood: she also strove in vain to get the truth from Felix, who but cried the more, — cried till he fell asleep.

Wilhelm watched by him: the night went peacefully away. Next morning Augustin was found lying dead in bed: he had cheated his attendants by a seeming rest, had silently loosened the bandages, and bled to death. Natalia went to walk with Felix: he was sportful as in his happiest days. "You are always good to me," said Felix, "you never scold, you never beat, me: I will tell you the truth, I did drink from the bottle. Mamma Aurelia used to rap me over the fingers every time I touched the bottle: father looked so sour, I thought he would beat me."

With winged steps Natalia hastened to the castle: Wilhelm came, still overwhelmed with care, to meet her. "Happy father!" cried she, lifting up the child, and throwing it into his arms: "there is thy son again! He drank from the bottle: his naughtiness has saved him."

They told the count the happy issue; but he listened with a smiling, silent, modest air of knowingness, like

one tolerating the error of worthy men. Jarno, attentive to all, could not explain this lofty self-complacency, till, after many windings, he at last discovered it to be his lordship's firm belief, that the child had really taken poison, and that he himself, by prayer and the laying on of hands, had miraculously counteracted the effects of it. After such a feat, his lordship now determined on departing. Everything, as usual with him, was made ready in a moment: the fair countess, when about to go, took Wilhelm's hand before parting with her sister's; she then pressed both their hands between her own, turned quickly round, and stepped into the carriage.

So many terrible and strange events, crowding one upon the back of another, inducing an unusual mode of life, and putting everything into disorder and perplexity, had brought a sort of feverish movement into all departments of the house. The hours of sleep and waking, of eating, drinking, and social conversation, were inverted. Except Theresa, none of them had kept in their accustomed course. The men endeavoured, by increased potations, to recover their good-humour; and, thus communicating to themselves an artificial vivacity, they drove away that natural vivacity which alone imparts to us true cheerfulness, and strength for action.

Wilhelm, in particular, was moved and agitated by the keenest feelings. Those unexpected, frightful incidents had thrown him out of all condition to resist a passion which had so forcibly seized his heart. Felix was restored to him, yet still it seemed that he had nothing: Werner's letters, the directions for his journey, were in readiness; there was nothing wanting but the resolution to remove. Everything conspired to hasten him. He could not but conjecture that Lothario and Theresa were awaiting his departure, that they might be wedded. Jarno was unusually

silent: you would have said that he had lost a portion of his customary cheerfulness. Happily the doctor helped our friend, in some degree, from this embarrassment: he declared him sick, and set about administering medicine to him.

The company assembled always in the evening: Friedrich, the wild madcap, who usually drank more wine than was meet, took possession of the talk, and by a thousand frolicsome citations, fantasies, and waggish allusions, often kept the party laughing, often, also, threw them into awkward difficulties, by the liberty he took to think aloud.

In the sickness of his friend he seemed to have little faith. Once, when they were all together, "Pray, doctor," cried he, "how is it you call the malady our friend is labouring under? Will none of the three thousand names with which you decorate your ignorance apply to it? The disease at least is not without examples. There is one such case," continued he, with an emphatic tone, "in the Egyptian or Babylonian history."

The company looked at one another, and smiled.

"What call you the king?" — cried he, and stopped short a moment. "Well, if you will not help me, I must help myself." He threw the door-leaves up, and pointed to the large picture in the antechamber. "What call you the goat-beard there, with the crown on, who is standing at the foot of the bed, making such a rueful face about his sick son? How call you the beauty who enters, and in her modest, roguish eyes, at once brings poison and antidote? How call you the quack of a doctor, who at this moment catches a glimpse of the reality, and, for the first time in his life, takes occasion to prescribe a reasonable recipe, to give a drug which cures to the very heart, and is at once salutiferous and savoury?"

In this manner he continued babbling. The com-

pany took it with as good a face as might be, hiding their embarrassment behind a forced laugh. A slight blush overspread Natalia's cheeks, and betrayed the movements of her heart. By good fortune she was walking up and down with Jarno; on coming to the door, with a cunning motion she slipped out, walked once or twice across the antechamber, and retired to her room.

The company were silent: Friedrich began to dance and sing, —

> " Wonders will ye see anon!
> Whatsoever's done is done,
> Said's whatever's said: straightway,
> E'er 't be day,
> Wonders will be shown."
>
> — *Editor's version.*

Theresa had gone out to find Natalia: Friedrich pulled the doctor forward to the picture, pronounced a ridiculous eulogium on medicine, and glided from the room.

Lothario had been standing all the while in the recess of a window: he was looking, without motion, down into the garden. Wilhelm was in the most dreadful state. Left alone with his friend, he still kept silence for a time; he ran with a hurried glance over all his history, and at last, with shuddering, surveyed his present situation: he started up, and cried, " If I am to blame for what is happening, for what you and I are suffering, punish me. In addition to my other miseries, deprive me of your friendship, and let me wander, without comfort, forth into the wide world, in which I should have mingled, and withdrawn myself from notice, long ago. But if you see in me the victim of a cruel entanglement of chance, out of which I could not thread my way, then give me the assurance of your love, of your friendship, on a journey which I dare not now postpone. A time will come when I may tell you

what has passed of late within me. Perhaps this is but a punishment which I am suffering, because I did not soon enough disclose myself to you, because I hesitated to display myself entirely as I was: you would have assisted me, you would have helped me out in proper season. Again and again have my eyes been opened to my conduct; but it was ever too late, it was ever in vain! How richly do I merit Jarno's censure! I imagined I had seized it: how firmly did I purpose to employ it, to commence another life! Could I, might I have done so? It avails not for mortals to complain of fate or of themselves. We are wretched, and appointed for wretchedness; and what does it matter whether blame of ours, higher influence or chance, virtue or vice, wisdom or folly, plunge us into ruin? Farewell! I will not stay another moment in a house where I have so fearfully violated the rights of hospitality. Your brother's indiscretion is unpardonable: it aggravates my suffering to the highest pitch, it drives me to despair."

"And what," replied Lothario, taking Wilhelm by the hand, "what if your alliance with my sister were the secret article on which depended my alliance with Theresa? This amends that noble maiden has appointed for you: she has vowed that these two pairs should appear together at the altar. 'His reason has made choice of me,' said she; 'his heart demands Natalia: my reason shall assist his heart.' We agreed to keep our eyes upon Natalia and yourself: we told the abbé of our plan, who made us promise not to intermeddle with this union, or attempt to forward it, but to suffer everything to take its course. We have done so: Nature has performed her part; our mad brother only shook the ripe fruit from the branch. And now, since we have come together so unusually, let us lead no common life: let us work together in a noble manner, and for noble purposes! It is incon-

ceivable how much a man of true culture can accomplish for himself and others, if, without attempting to rule, he can be the guardian over many; can induce them to do that in season which they are at any rate disposed enough to do; can guide them to their objects, which in general they see with due distinctness, though they miss the road to them. Let us make a league for this: it is no enthusiasm, but an idea which may be fully executed, which, indeed, is often executed, only with imperfect consciousness, by people of benevolence and worth. Natalia is a living instance of it. No other need attempt to rival the plan of conduct which has been prescribed by Nature for that pure and noble soul."

He had more to say, but Friedrich with a shout came jumping in. "What a garland have I earned!" cried he: "how will you reward me? Myrtle, laurel, ivy, leaves of oak, the freshest you can find, come twist them: I have merits far beyond them all. Natalia is thine! I am the conjurer who raised this treasure for thee."

"He raves," said Wilhelm: "I must go."

"Art thou empowered to speak?" inquired Lothario, holding Wilhelm from retiring.

"By my own authority," said Friedrich, "and the grace of God. It was thus I was the wooer, thus I am the messenger: I listened at the door; she told the abbé everything."

"Barefaced rogue! who bade thee listen?" said Lothario.

"Who bade her bolt the door?" cried Friedrich. "I heard it all: she was in a wondrous pucker. In the night when Felix seemed so ill, and was lying half upon her knees, and thou wert sitting comfortless before her, sharing the beloved load, she made a vow, that, if the child died, she would confess her love to thee, and offer thee her hand. And now, when the

child lives, why should she change her mind? What we promise under such conditions, we keep under any. Nothing wanting but the parson! He will come, and marvel what strange news he brings."

The abbé entered. "We know it all," cried Friedrich; "be as brief as possible; it is mere formality you come for, — they never send for you or me on any other score."

"He has listened," said the baron. "Scandalous!" exclaimed the abbé.

"Now, quick!" said Friedrich. "How stands it with the ceremonies? These we can reckon on our fingers. You must travel: the marchese's invitation answers to a hair's-breadth. If we had you once beyond the Alps, it will all be right: the people are obliged to you for undertaking anything surprising; you procure them an amusement which they are not called to pay for. It is as if you gave a free ball: all ranks partake in it."

"In such popular festivities," replied the abbé, "you have done the public much service in your time; but to-day, it seems, you will not let me speak at all."

"If it is not just as I have told it," answered Friedrich, "let us have it better. Come round, come round: we must see them both together."

Lothario embraced his friend, and led him to Natalia, who, with Theresa, came to meet them. All were silent.

"No loitering!" cried Friedrich. "In two days you may be ready for your travels. Now, think you, friend," continued he, addressing Wilhelm, "when we first scraped acquaintance, and I asked you for the pretty nosegay, who could have supposed you were ever to receive a flower like this from me?"

"Do not, at the moment of my highest happiness, remind me of those times!"

"Of which you need not be ashamed, any more than

one need be ashamed of his descent. The times were very good times: only I cannot but laugh to look at thee; to my mind thou resemblest Saul the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom."

"I know not the worth of a kingdom," answered Wilhelm; "but I know I have attained a happiness which I have not deserved, and which I would not change with anything in life."

THE END.

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